

# Homily for Saturday in the Nineteenth Week after Pentecost October 10, 2020

By the Reverend Stephen Gerth

*Year 2, Proper 22: Galatians 3:19–29\*; Psalm 105:1–7; Luke 11:27–28*

Adolph Adam was a German scholar. He died in 2005.<sup>1</sup> For many years he was professor of practical theology, liturgy, and homiletics at the University of Mainz.<sup>2</sup> I've had a copy of his book, *The Liturgical Year: its history & its meaning after the reform of the liturgy*<sup>3</sup> since it came out in 1981, while I was in seminary. This morning I got it out to remind myself about the tradition of remembering the Virgin Mary on Saturdays when there were no other celebrations. But first I looked up, may I say, a snarky, disrespectful reference about the color of vestments for these Saturday celebrations here at Saint Mary's. It's in Newbury Halsted Frost Read's 1931 book, *The Story of St. Mary's*. Frost became a member of the board of trustees in 1929. When he died in February 1950, he was secretary and treasurer of Saint Mary's.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://id.loc.gov/authorities/names/n50037020.html>, (accessed 10 October 2020).

<sup>2</sup> Daniel P. Gregassy, Review article: Adam, Adolf, *The Eucharistic Celebration: The Source and Summit of Faith* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1994), *Worship* 70 no 2 Mar 1996, 184–87.

<sup>3</sup> Adolf Adam, *The Liturgical Year: its History & its meaning after the reform of the liturgy*, trans. Matthew O'Connell (New York: Pueblo Publishing Company, 1981).

When Father Thomas McKee Brown, Saint Mary's first rector, died, there was a report to the board about which vestments then in use were "property of the corporation" or personal property of Father Brown. Read wrote, "It will be noticed that no reference is made in this list to any green vestments. This was due to the fact that in Father Brown's day—how natural that phrase had already become although Father Brown was not yet two months dead—there were no green vestments at St. Mary's." He continued, "In churches dedicated to Our Lady the ferial color is properly blue, and the ancient and traditional color had been adhered to until the advent of Dr. Christian. Let us hope the day is not far distant when the color we derive from our dedication will be restored and the ancient usage reestablished at St. Mary's."<sup>4</sup> We have white vestments with Marian ornaments, but no blue vestments.

There are proper Masses appointed for the Saturdays of Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter. In the Advent and Christmas Seasons, the Blessed Virgin Mary comes up all of the time. One can't have Advent and Christmas without her. In Lent, the Feast of the

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<sup>4</sup> Newbury Frost Read, *The Story of St. Mary's: The Society of the Free Church of St. Mary the Virgin, New York City, 1868–1931* (New York, 1931), 169—70.

Annunciation of Our Lord Jesus Christ to the Blessed Virgin occurs most years. When March 25 falls during Holy Week or Easter Week, the custom is to move its celebration to Monday after the Second Sunday of Easter. In Epiphany Season and the Season after Pentecost, the Eucharist is of the Blessed Virgin Mary when no other commemoration is appointed. My family systems theory coach, the late Rabbi Edwin Friedman, liked to joke that one's mother is the original addiction. Not a day goes by that I do not think about and miss my mother, who died in 2013. I know my brother and sister do too because we speak about it from time to time. I think this is probably true for most of us.

The Jewish heritage of the seventh day being a day of rest was embraced by the first Christians, who were Jewish, to a “memorial of creation.”<sup>5</sup> Following the practice that I knew first at Nashotah House Seminary in Wisconsin, in the seasons after Epiphany and after Pentecost, the second reading at Morning Prayer is always followed by canticle 12, “A Song of Creation.”

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<sup>5</sup> Paul F. Bradshaw and Maxwell E. Johnson, *The Origins of Feasts, Fasts and Seasons in Early Christianity* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2011), 24.

It begins “Glorify the Lord, all you works of the Lord, praise him and highly exalt him for ever.”<sup>6</sup>

✠ In the Name of the Father, and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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<sup>6</sup> *The Book of Common Prayer* (1979), 88–89.