

The Royal Tapestry

Her hair was like a royal tapestry, the King was held captive in its tresses. Song of Songs 7:5

Volume 8, Number 2

Advent, Christmas, Epiphany 2005

An individual woman, like a single cord of three strands consisting of yesterday's goodly heritage, today's prayer, and tomorrow's ministry (*a cord of three* Ec. 4:12) joins with other women to become part of a beautifully woven picture of God's living prayer - a TAPESTRY.

TAPESTRY COVENANT: I agree, with God's help, to daily follow Mary's example in submission to God's will by praying, *let it be done unto me according to Thy Word*. Luke 1:38. I agree to pray to God, through Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit for my family, the church, nations, and myself.



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ADVENT

40 Days before Christmas (East)

4 Sundays before Christmas (West)

Advent is from the Latin word meaning 'coming'. The coming of Christ. The first coming was 2000 years ago in the town of Bethlehem with the birth of the baby Jesus, the Second Coming of Christ will be the glory described in Revelation to which all Christians look forward.

The Orthodox begin preparation forty days before Christmas just as the forty days of preparation during Lent before Easter. It is a season of repentance, fasting, and prayer to prepare one's spirit for the indwelling of a Holy God.

Western Christians assemble the Advent wreath of four candles to represent the four

millennia of the Old Testament. This wreath of green with purple candles is arranged for the four Sundays prior to Christmas. A new candle is lighted for each week of the season. Also, used is the Advent Calendar depicting each day.

The liturgical color of the season is purple to symbolize the royalty of the King of Kings.

TWELVE OF CHRISTMAS

26 December til 6 January

During the sixteenth century, many Christians were persecuted for their faith. In order to give glory to God in the Highest and to teach their children the ways of God without the persecutors knowing, thereby inflicting more pain, the song "The Twelve Days of Christmas" was written and sung. Christians today, five hundred years later, are being persecuted around the world. It is politically incorrect to say "Merry Christmas"; one is expected to say "Happy Holidays" in order to avoid discriminating against another's faith. May we with joy and hope sing the following song during the days of Christmas and teach the lessons of Christianity to our children and grandchildren.



On the 1st day of Christmas my True Love (God) gave to me: A Partridge in a pear tree.

(The partridge sacrifices herself in the face of danger for her young. The partridge represents Jesus Christ in His self-sacrifice on the Cross for our sins, thereby granting to all who believe in Him eternal life.. John 3:16)

6 January

On the 2nd day of Christmas: 2 Turtle Doves
(The Old and New Testaments, two segments of Holy Scripture united into one Bible.)

On the 3rd day of Christmas: 3 French Hens
(The Trinity: God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit Matthew 3:13-17)

On the 4th day of Christmas: 4 Calling Birds
(The 4 Evangelists: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John - and their Gospels.)

On the 5th day of Christmas: 5 Golden Rings
(First 5 books of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.)

On the 6th day of Christmas: 6 Geese A-Laying
(The 6 days of Creation as described in Genesis 1)

On the 7th day of Christmas: 7 Swans A-Swimming
(The 7 Gifts of the Holy Spirit: wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miraculous powers, prophecy, discernment, tongues, interpretation of tongues. 1 Corinthians 12: 4-11)

On the 8th day of Christmas: 8 Maids A-Milking
(8 Beatitudes: *Blessed are they.* . Matthew 5)

On the 9th day of Christmas: 9 Ladies Dancing
(The 9 Fruits of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Galatians 5:7)

On the 10th day of Christmas: 10 Lords A-Leaping
(The 10 Commandments, Exodus 20)

On the 11th day of Christmas: 11 Pipers Piping
(The 11 Apostles who did not betray Our LORD)

On the 12th day of Christmas: 12 Drummers Drumming
(The 12 Doctrines of the Creed upon which the Christian church is based.)

MERRY CHRISTMAS!
GOD BLESS YOU, ONE AND ALL!

EPIPHANY

This last feast of the Twelve Days of Christmas is called Epiphany in the West (Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran & Protestant) and The Feast of the Theophany of Our Lord in the East (Orthodox) from the Greek meaning 'manifestation'.

Epiphany is to commemorate the coming of the Wise Men to the baby Jesus in Bethlehem. (Matthew 2) The Gentile magi came to adore the Messiah given by God for the entire world.

The Feast of the Theophany is the celebration of the Baptism of Jesus, at which time God the Son is 'manifested' to the world, as well as, God the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove, and God the Father's voice saying 'This is My Beloved Son'. Matthew 3:13-17

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Comments on Day of Prayer

by

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'Every time I think of the Tapestry Day of Prayer (Annapolis, Maryland 24 September 2005), my mind goes immediately to the morning service and the anointing of oil ceremony that you did for those of us who came forward to pray. You could feel the moving of the Holy Spirit during that time. What a special time that was and the 'specialness' still lingers! It truly was a wonderful day!'

Lt. Colonel Bosh's talk given during the
Day in Annapolis:

Tapestry Day of Prayer
September 24, 2005

Women's Ministries is the umbrella term that covers all ministries offered to women in The Salvation Army.

The fundamental purpose is:

- To win women for Christ, encourage spiritual growth, and provide Christian fellowship.
- To promote a purposeful life.
- To work toward the betterment of the home, the community, the nation and the world.
- To recruit soldiers (church members) and link families to the fellowship of believers.

Women play a vital and definitive roll in shaping society through their influence in the home and family. The aim of the Women's Ministries program is to provide Christian fellowship and practical help that will benefit not only the individual and her family, but also the nation.

Programming of meetings and activities is varied and informative and includes the four-fold purpose of: Worship, Education, Fellowship, and Service.

In an effort to win women and/or families for Christ and to minister to their needs we need to explore and implement a variety of programs.

I have brought with me today one of the resources that we use in programming. There is a theme that is chosen for each year with programs for the whole year based on the theme with the four-fold purpose – education, fellowship, service and worship. With each book there is a CD with the programs on it. On the CD you will find back issues of our program resource material. You are more than welcome to take a copy.

I trust you will find these programs helpful to you as you work with the women in your church.



Seasons of the Year: A Liturgical Home
Bonnie Shannonhouse

*To everything there is a season,
and a time to every purpose under the Heaven.*
Ecclesiastes 3:1

To remind ourselves and to teach our grandchildren the church seasons of each year, our china is rotated with the coming of seasonal feasts that are celebrated within the Christian community of believers.

September has been the beginning of a new year for us for years - school begins and our lives change from lazy summer days to a regimented time of study. The Eastern Church begins its liturgical year at this time as do the Jewish members of our Judeo/Christian heritage

Beginning on the first of September to prepare for the harvest of our small vegetable garden, All Saints Day on 1 November (instead of Halloween on 30 October), and Thanksgiving; the rust colored china is brought out of the corner cupboard to be used. The rust/red color of the ancient patterned plates and covered dishes blends well with the garden vegetables such as gourds and pumpkins, the changing colors of the leaves and 'pleasure' garden flowers.

The next change of china comes 40 days before Christmas at which time the Eastern church turns to Advent. It seems appropriate somehow to keep the ancient time of 40 days as in Lent.

On the 4th Sunday before Christmas our Advent wreaths of green with purple candles and the beautiful Advent calenders are placed at appropriate places around the house.

The rust china is placed in the cupboard at this juncture, and the red transfer ware china is brought out from the china cabinet in honor of this season of preparation of the Coming of Christ as a child at Christmas and His Second Coming on the *wings of the wind*.

The beautiful red Spode plates and cups serve to remind us that the discipline of heart and soul in repentance, fasting, and prayer must begin in earnest during Advent. Amazing what color will do to one's prayer life!

Then the Christmas season with the red of china and the green of magnolia, box, poet

laurel, cedar, ivy, and pine from the garden filling the dining room with sweet fragrance. The 'Grands' (grandchildren) love this time of decoration; cooking of delicious foods; fires in the fireplaces of the living room, dining room, and master bedroom (their favorite cosy warm place for a winter picnic of hot chocolate and soup). The family gathers the week of Christmas between 26th of December and the New Year so that 'Papa' can have his family under one roof as his grandfather 'Papa' did years ago.

The red plates stay out through 6 January of Epiphany (the coming of the Wise men to adore the Messiah and the Baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan - The Manifestation of Our Lord); through 2 February of The Presentation in the Temple (40 days following the Christmas birth, Jesus is presented to the priest in the Temple in Jerusalem) and Candlemas (blessing of candles to be used for the coming year which symbolizes the Light of Christ); and then on into the 40 days of Lent. The red of the patterned plates takes on a new meaning - the Blood of Christ shed upon the Cross for our sins during the Lenten season.

Next plates to be used will be those of Aunt Julia. Delicate spring flowers rimed in gold is the perfect china of Easter! (Pascha in the East and the fulfillment of Passover in the Old Testament).

The final season of change for the dining room china is that of The Feast of the Ascension of Our Lord celebrated 40 days following Easter. Ten days later Pentecost is celebrated with the coming of the Holy Spirit, thus completing for us the coming of Christ the Son and the coming of the Holy Spirit by the Father. We enter the season of the Trinity which will last until the new year in September. Our china makes the last change of the church year to the blue and white plates of old willow and the everyday solid white.

Thus our Season of Plates becomes our liturgical seasonal reminders of the life of Jesus, helps us teach our Grands the 2000 year heritage of our Christian faith, and reminds all who share a meal with us what God the Father has done for us through His Son our Savior and Lord, in the power of the Holy Spirit; and prods our minds of what our disciplined response to Him should be during the year.