

1. 12. 69  
14. 12. 70 (248) part 1  
29. 11. 71

GRATT: Czech Christmas Mass (Hymn)  
RHK SUP/120

This music is from an old Czech folk Mass for Christmas, one of many embroideries on the text and music of the Advent liturgy that were produced in Czechoslovakia.

TAPE (Czech Advent Carols)

[That music is from Czechoslovakia, from an old embroidery on the music and texts of the Sunday Masses of Advent.] There was a strong <sup>Czech</sup> tradition of Advent music and ceremonies in preparation for Christmas, which I suppose are now taboo in the eyes of the Czechs' present rulers for whom the coming of Christ is a superstition of no importance. Good King Wenceslaus whatever his bad points may have been, at least wasn't that shortsighted. <sup>Using this music in Nidday Prayers during Advent wk. begins this week, may...</sup> So I propose to use this music to introduce these Nidday Prayers for Advent, and it may help to keep in mind, not only that Christ's coming hasn't been made known or manifest yet to many of the world's people, but that there are many who don't want Him to come, don't want anything to do with Him or His gift to mankind. We have such people here in this city too, who nevertheless celebrate Christmas but deliberately excluding Christ. Advent, which began yesterday, is as the Latin derivation of the word wd. suggest, a time of "coming". In celebrating the mystery of Christ and His redeeming of the world, the Church is longing and looking forward to the coming of Christ, and in this spirit prepares to celebrate the annual commemoration of the time when God became man. This will be the meaning of Christmas. And in these weeks we're getting ready, or shd be, for the coming of a Person, for some me. It's no good beseeching the take-over of Christmas by commercial interests (with their stoppy seasons, sales, christmas cards - so on) or clamouring to put Christ back into Christmas, unless we ourselves try to live in the spirit of the Advent season - longing for Christ's coming, looking forward eagerly to it and receiving Him, recognizing Him when He does come. The modern paganism of Christ-mastine does preserve enough of the Christian spirit to allow it to be given

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Veni Veni Emmanuel (Kodaly)  
RHK MONI-U. 13.  
VANG :202

the fuller meaning it lacks, in its joy - celebration - kindness - giving of gifts. The gift God gives, in the Person of Christ, is still new and exciting, if only people had eyes to recognize it. To open other's eyes to this reality, we've got to see it ourselves first - it wd. be a pity to get so tied up, distracted, by preparing for something, Christmas, (sending out greetings, buying presents, calling on friends, decorating the house), that one had little time for the Person behind it all. We're living <sup>in the 1970s</sup> (on the eve of the 1970s), not in the last days of Old Testament times: Christmas is not make-believe or sentiment. Christ has come - he was born in Bethlehem 2000 yrs. ago, and it's not that event we're waiting for. In a few weeks' time we're going to recall and celebrate it, but it's not and mustn't be a return to the past. The mystery of His coming to share our human life and heal the world's suffering and ill, is still with us today. Christ is here, working and living in those who bring his love and his message of hope to their fellow-men. He is here, waiting to be met and recognized in the poor, the lonely, the suffering, the homeless, the outcasts. What He came to do, to renew creation, to re-unite mankind in the love of His Father, is gradually being brought about through His power - spirit working in Christians everywhere. [Come Emmanuel, God-with-us: listen now to this motet, an old Advent one, in a setting by Kodaly]

MUSIC

PRAYERS.

"Come, Lord Jesus" is a very ancient Christian prayer, and it's in the N. Test. written not so long after Our Lord's resurrection and ascension and His sending the H. Spirit on His disciples. We can still say 'Come, Lord Jesus'; and this is what

A 7th-Cent. Advent hymn, ed. Ronald Knox put into English verse this way: Q. (Ant. Prays. p. 541)

Advent now is about. We've got to be ready, get ready for the Lord's coming. try to  
 realise how much we and our world need Him. bask in our hope and longing for the final  
 renewal of all things which His promised 2nd coming will bring. Meanwhile our own  
 contribution to that renewal, thro' Him, must go on — in our own lives and the  
 bit of the world's life into which we stid. be bringing Christ's love. 'Come, Lord Jesus'  
 Eternity entered time 2000 yrs ago: with Christ we're living in eternity, now — only,  
 the veils of time hide His fact from our eyes. When He comes again those veils  
 will be finally removed, for all to see Him — even those who now close their eyes  
 entirely to Him. But until then, for each of us He's still coming in other, personal  
 ways — in the sacraments and life of His Church, in prayer, in the chance meetings  
 and events of our lives where, briefly, those veils of time seem removed and we can  
 see His face, in the goodness and kindness of people, and finally when He calls us  
 to Himself. In these few weeks, while the stopping days like Christmas run out and  
 the final passing dates roll by, let us pray 'Come, Lord Jesus': that the world may  
 see You are its saviour, the only one who can heal its sickness, fulfill its joy,  
 bring it true peace and brotherhood, give it hope and the substance of hope, make it  
mean still, for You are the one in whom and for whom it was all created. Come Lord  
 Jesus, and by your action in the hearts of all men of good-will, make our city a place  
 where men will respect each other and all may share the good things of life you've  
 given us, where men can live humanly, as you did for us. Come Lord Jesus — by your  
 coming more completely into my life transform this Advent — Christmas into a time of  
 grace and true love of God for me and for those I love.