

Feasting and Fasting in the German Lutheran Church In Every Day Life and in the Liturgy

Dompastor Wolfgang Grusnick
Cathedral of Luebeck, Germany

1.1 There is a Time for Everything¹

In Germany this sentence has not been popular for a long time. Almost the opposite is true: Anything goes at any time.

I will give you two examples. In a supermarket I can buy strawberries in December as well in June. In Neuss am Rhein one can go skiing 365 days a year. I could give you much more examples. What is the result? Every day is like the other. The difference between workdays and Sunday is blurred. If necessary the machines work day and night seven days the week. Everybody can get anything at any time, finance permitting. There are no longer any special days or particular seasons.

When I was a boy, it was consensus even in northern Germany, that lent was a special time different in character from the rest of the year. For instance, it would have been unheard of to organise a party during those weeks. Unlike other parts of our country, the North did not celebrate Carnival, yet everybody knew the difference between Lent and Carnival. People followed the time of the year, and the year had a profile. Today a carnival is celebrated even in Lent, and the bushes in our front gardens are decorated with Easter-eggs since the beginning of March. Yet, with Easter Sunday hardly passing the decoration will disappear - otherwise your neighbour might assume negligence is at work.

1.2 Lent – a Time of Fasting or a Time of Christ’s Suffering?

Luther and his friends disapproved some of the known approaches to fasting amongst their contemporaries. For example, when people prepared refined meals and thereby avoided the real character of fasting. Luther called it “hypocrisy” The reformer also disagreed with the teaching of Thomas Aquinas by which it was possible to get divine mercy and remission of sins through fasting.²

¹ Eccl 3,1

² CA XXVI; homas S.Th II,2 qu 147 Assumitur ieiunium principaliter ad tria: primo quidem ad concupiscentias carnis reprimendas...secundo assumitur ad hoc, quod mens liberius eleuetur ad sublimia contemplanda...tertio ad satisfaciendum pro peccatis.

In fact, one of the central points of the Reformation refers to “iustificatio peccatoris sola gratia”. Justification comes through faith alone in Jesus Christ.

Therefore, the focus of Lent has been the remembrance of the suffering of Jesus. Protestant Christians express its meaning throughout Lent by chanting and preaching the suffering of our Lord Jesus Christ.³ It is also voiced in special prayers for Lent and in the oratories for instance “the Passion according to St. Matthew” by J.S. Bach. While Luther’s critique of Thomas Aquinas’s reading of fasting opened new avenues, some fine aspects also vanished for a time, such as that fasting may purify one’s mind and may discipline one’s desire, all to the glory of God.

1.3 Fasting Rediscovered

In 1980, protestant liturgical committees in Germany agreed to replace the old general term “Fastenzeit” (time of fasting) with the more specific expression “Passionszeit (time of the suffering of Christ). This change of terms happened precisely at a moment when the German Protestant Church re-discovered the value of fasting. Not only believers regained interest in fasting but even representatives of politics, businessmen and artists. The German media began a campaign asking people how they wished to fast and developed a slogan which since has become a famous phrase: “Seven weeks without”. This motto implies that somebody will live for seven weeks without something that has been part of his life but which is actually superfluous. This comes as a response to the recognition that abundance of food, of free time and chances in life does not enhance the quality of life. Therefore, people asked, what is the advantage of constant growth, or what good does it do

- to increase the number of highways in order to accommodate more cars?,
- or to build additional power stations in order to gain more energy?,
- or to puff up the wrapping of consumer goods in order to profit more?,
- or to enlarge the use of pesticides in order to get still larger crops?⁴

Those who take up those seven weeks of fasting are aware that the consumerism of one part of the world causes much harm to the other part. Christians who participate in this fasting pay tribute with their personal way of life and respond to the call of the Protestant Church which asks to live “seven weeks without”, for instance,

² CA XXVI; Thomas S.Th II,2 qu 147 Assumitur ieiunium principaliter ad tria: primo quidem ad con cupiscentias carnis reprimendas...secundo assumitur ad hoc, quod mens liberius elevetur ad sublimia contemplanda...tertio ad satisfaciendum pro peccatis.

³ WA 52, 226

⁴ Erhard Eppler, EEK 281

- without the habitual routine of life,
- without alcohol, sweets, television, going by car,
- or, for example, thinking about the essence of life,
- or helping poor people.

In the end, each one should find his own way how to make room and to give God the precedence in life.

2 Divine Service is Like a Feast

The statement, that the Divine Service is a necessary and curative break of the workday comes in the wake of Harvey Cox's book, *Feast of Fools* (1969). This volume pleads for the recovering of celebrating and shows that feasting is not a luxury, but rather provides humanity with the occasion for re-establishing itself with time, history, and eternity. The recovering of celebration will save society from its religious crisis, which is called "Death of God."⁵ Therefore the Divine Service must be celebrated, and should precisely not "be conducted".

The German Protestant Church followed suit and developed forms of celebrating the Divine Service. One such type is called "Liturgical Night" which came into existence in the late sixties during the great meetings of lay-people (Kirchentage). Such "Liturgical Nights" invite to celebrating the Eucharist at the end of a day's work. It is not a new teaching of the Eucharist but a new way of celebrating it. Those who participating spend much time celebrating, including preparing intercessions and adding spontaneous contributions. The German expression is "Feierabendmahl" and describes the two notions implied accurately: resting in the evening and celebrating with joy. It also portrays the Eucharist in correspondence to the Acts of the Apostles 2:46 where people enjoy celebrating the Eucharist: "They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God..."

Last but not least, a liturgical textbook was published with the title, *Die Kunst Gott zu feiern*⁶ (The Art to Celebrate God).

2.1 The Loss of Celebrating

Since the time of the Reformation the Divine Service often had lost its sense of celebrating. The weight was put on teaching. Luther's instructions were to be

⁵ Harvey Cox

absorbed mentally, the Gospel had to be studied, and later, the Divine Service was to teach moral behaviour and to encourage fighting injustice. A Divine Service filled with such intentions, as honourable as they might be, missed the elements of liberty and generosity, which are necessary for celebrating. Thus the Divine Service lost its festive character which only recently it has begun to re-gain. However, to visitors from Orthodox Churches, who are used to their own glorious liturgy, the Divine Service in a German Protestant Church will still look like a sort of “fasting service”.

I remember an Easter Service, in which I took part in southern Germany. The congregation was singing the Easter choral “Wir wollen alle fröhlich sein” (Let us be all joyful). Every verse is followed by an extended and joyous singing of “hallelujah”. Although it interrupts the flow of the narrative, but congregants who cannot follow the words of the hymn, like little children or the elderly with reading problems, join gladly in when it comes to sing “hallelujah”. In southern Germany they were economical. They sang the hallelujah only once, at the end of the whole hymn. For me it meant, that the Easter joy was killed by economical and practical thinking and singing.

Against Luther’s will the Protestant Church became the heir of the abstinence of holy communion in the late middle age. There were reasons for the 4. Lateran-Council to decide that every catholic should take part in the holy communion at least once a year.

As there is no use for the protestant church to celebrate Eucharist without persons taking part in it, a form of protestant service was developed, which was only few times combined with celebration of Eucharist. The sermon became very important, that means, the service became very intellectual and lost the element of celebration. The Pastor preaches, the congregation listen and is sometimes allowed to sing. A service on Sunday without Eucharist must seem like a fasting-service.

As the studies of the clergymen was a historical one, the sermon became an explanation of the time of Jesus on the one side and an answering to the question, asking the importance for today, on the other side.

This pattern makes us feel the deep ditch ⁷ which separates us from the holy stories, but it does not overcome it.

⁶ Rainer Volp

It was important for Luther to emphasise, that the gift of the Holy Communion is the forgiveness of sins. When distributing the Communion the celebrant says to each recipient: given for you. The connection between Eucharist and the forgiveness of sins can not be given up, but it has become too one-sided.

A service which only looks at the forgiveness of sins, must become sad and without joy. Luther himself always spoke of three gifts: forgiveness of sins, eternal life and never ending joy.

He does not only look at the abolished separation between God and the sinner, he looks at the wealth of life given to us as well.

2.2 God is Present

The new textbook of prayer of the Lutheran church in Germany proposes to the President of the service how to welcome the congregation if necessary: "Welcome to the house of God. God is here. We are here. That's enough.."⁸

Indeed it is not necessary to talk about the weather, whether it is sunny or stormy. People are gathered, they have come because they feel they are invited. God is waiting for them, not only the Pastor of the parish.

God is here –we are here, that is not really new, but is has to be discovered once more like we sing: Gott ist gegenwärtig, lasset uns anbeten (God is present, come to adore him).

Even on Pentecost, when we repeatedly sing "come holy spirit", we don't expect God to be absent, but we hope, that he already has heard our request for his coming.

We have described the service as a feast where we celebrate the presence of God. Now we must think about the meeting with Christ during the service. Service is an extraordinary time, an interruption of every day life, time to breath. We ensure the presence of God. And we belong to a bigger community gathering around Christ.

⁷ G.E.Lessing

⁸ Gottesdienstbuch-Ergänzungsband

The service is a feast. We notice that our time is given by God. He himself dedicates the time and trusts it on us. God himself comes close.

Two liturgical elements have become gradually important to me. First, it is the opening sentence, "In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit". It reminds of God who invited us, for the first time, when we were baptised. The second element is the greeting: "The Lord be with you – and with your spirit." This salute establishes an agreement between the celebrating community and the President / Pastor and interprets the service as an event of the Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit we would remain alone.

2.3 Theology of the Word of God

The sermon is an important part of the service. To write a sermon is hard work. I need much time to prepare my sermon.

When I finish, I say in front of God while thinking of my community: That is what I could do. The result is independent of my work. I trust that the Holy Spirit is effective through human words. We hope that people want to listen and that they will not only hear human words but the word of God. Christ says: He who receives you, receives me. That is an immense claim and could lead into temptation if humility is not on guard.

When Christ himself speaks to us in the word of his witness *it is a miracle*.

The service is memory (anamnesis) of Christ. The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament defines anamnesis as "reactivating faded impressions by an act of will."

The theology of the word of God at the time of the Lutheran Reformation would have never said it like this. In the meantime the Hebrew way of thinking has become clear. "Zakar" means much more than to reactive faded impressions. It becomes reality. Josef asked the cup bearer who had been a prisoner with him, to remember him when returning to the Pharaoh. But he did not. So the situation of Josef remained unchanged.

When people remember God's great deeds they remember them as being in the present time. When we pray: "Remember, o Lord, your great mercy and love for they are from old,"⁹ it means, God should intervene in reality. In the Lutheran understanding of the Divine Service the whole service is but a Christus-Anamnese.

⁹ Psalm 25,6

The congregation does not only remember the life and deeds of Jesus but Christ is regarded as being present, in reality, including all he has done and all he will do.

Martin Luther said, "Neither you nor I would know anything about Christ, nor believe in him, if it were not for the preaching of the Gospel about the Holy Spirit. The works are done - but if they were hidden and unknown they would have been done in vain and lost. Due to the preaching of the Word of God such treasure does not remain concealed.

Although Lessing speaks of the ugly ditch of history which divorces us from salvation history we yet have to speak about the presence of Christ in his word spoken by us.

As we speak –like the Roman-Catholic Church – about the real-presence of Christ in the Eucharist, we must also speak about the real presence of Christ in the sermon. The word of the sermon does not only reach the listener but, moreover, it places the preacher and the audience in front of God, who wants to meet us as the loving, comforting, and rescuing God.

God did not only ask Adam, "Where are you?", but God asks me too, and there is no chance to evade.

When Lazarus was dead, Jesus said to Martha: "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" "Yes, Lord", she told him, "I believe that you are Christ, the Son of God."

Preaching the word of God does not only mean teaching or explaining, it requires also from the preacher to answer whether he believes it.

If the Roman-Catholic Church assumes that it is impossible to celebrate jointly with the Lutherans the community in the Eucharist but it is possible to do so in the Service of the Word, it is mistaken. It is one Christ, who comes to us in Bread and Wine and also in his Word. Christ is really present in his Word too, not only in the sacrament. The word is sacramental.

2.4 Today, if You Hear his Voice, do not Harden Your Hearts

We define the service as a feast, and its centre is the presence of Christ who invites us. He makes himself known by his Word and he gives himself to us when we

receive Bread and Wine. Celebrating the Eucharist we discover how the past becomes the present.

That is not new.

On Easter the liturgy of the Holy Communion opens with the preface:

“It is indeed right and our greatest joy to give you thanks at all the times and in all places, especially **on this day** when Christ is risen from the death.”

We sing “**Heut** triumphieret Gottes Sohn” (“Today, God’s Son is triumphant”). Eastern does not mean to remember what happened in the past, but what happens today for us.

The notion of “today” is expressed best in the celebration of the Easter Vigil. In the middle of the 20th century, the liturgy of the Easter Vigil was re-discovered almost simultaneously by the Roman-Catholic and the Protestant Churches. When the symbol of Christ, the Easter candle, is brought into the church, the congregation sings “Exultet”: Rejoice, heavenly powers! Sing, choirs of angels! Jesus Christ, our light, is risen. And later: **This** is our Passover feast, when Christ, the true lamp, is slain. **This is the night** when first you saved our ancestors: you freed the people of Israel from their slavery and led them dry shod through the sea. **This is the night** when the pillar of fire destroyed the shadow of sins. **This is the night** when Jesus Christ broke the chains of death and rose triumphant from the grave.

Here the Christian liturgy selects the passages from the Bible as they are known from the Jewish tradition. Every generation shall celebrate Passover as though they themselves were delivered from Egypt.

According to the Jewish tradition the great events of salvation are clustered on this day. Just as the Jewish people remember different and traumatic actions on the 9th of Aw, so on Passover they remember the history of salvation. The Palestinian Targum explains the verse in the book of Exodus 12:42 as referring to the four nights of salvation: the creation of light, the binding of Isaac, the liberation of Israel from Egypt, and the night, we wait for the arrival of the Messiah. These lectures belong to the 12 lectures for the Easter Vigil, of which we read some of them.

There is a new arrangement for the celebration of the Easter Vigil in the Protestant Church. Analogous to the praising of the Easter light as “this is the day”, it now says: “This is the night to remember, what God has done for us and what he will do. We think of the beginning when God created the world and the light and we look into the future expecting the day, when God will redeem us.

This is the night of salvation. Let us hear, how God created the world and separated the light from the darkness.” (Then we shall read Gen 1)

That means, the night of salvation is now, today. All that God has done and all that he will do in order to fulfil his salvation, this happens now, at the very moment when celebrating the feast.

3.1 Celebrating the Beneficial Presence of God in a Wicked World

“How can we sing the songs of the Lord while being in a foreign land?”¹⁰ How can you sing after all, that happened? We celebrate the Divine Service in a world tempted by God’s otherness. The question is raised whether there is reason to celebrate or whether celebration is only possible when ignoring the reality of the world. On the one hand we praise the Lord and say: “He has done everything well”, while on the other hand living in a world, where children are starving to death and innocent people become victims of terrorism. Are our services too beautiful, to festive?

We think about the presence in liturgy. The salvation of God has not yet stopped the death. We say, “Today Christ is risen. He has overcome death for our sake.” In the readings for Passover we do not only hear, what God has done, but we wait even for the arrival of the Messiah. In the same way, Christians of the Early Church expected the return of Christ during the Easter Vigil. They waited beyond midnight, and then, celebrating the Eucharist they anticipated his return.¹¹

Not only, what God already has done, is present in the celebration of the Eucharist, but even, what he will fulfil. Although it is invisible, it is celebrated as if real.

This is also the meaning of the prayer for the Eucharist in the new Lutheran book of prayer: “We thank you, God, you have given us our lives and you have given us the world to live in it. We thank you for the new world, that will come, and for the love, that will succeed all.”¹²

Another prayer says:

“Now, when we receive the bread of life and lift up the cup of salvation, we are celebrating God’s new creation.

The strong will come to the weak,
a light will shine on dark places;
in the streets you will hear the call of joy,
tears will be dried, and the houses will be full laughing.
The kingdom of God becomes reality.”¹³

¹⁰ Psalm 137, 4 engl.

¹¹ Hinweis von Irene Mildenerger

¹² Lutheran Book of Worship

¹³ ¹³ Gebete aus der Ökumene

In the community assembled we are included in this creative movement of the love of God. The Sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces. He will do it, but we hear his word today. Consolation is already active now, not only later
On the other hand: love has to be personified by us too.

3.2 Responsibility for the World and for the Feast

Flowers decorate the church, candles give a warm light and old and new art speak of faith. Sacred music gives a solemn touch to the Divine Service. When thinking of the Divine Service as a feast, we refer to the celebration of the Eucharist. In a report of the General Protestant Church Meeting "Kirchentag" 1981 it says: "Today the Protestant Church rediscovers the Eucharist, meaning that more and more congregations discover the Eucharist as the centre of their spiritual lives. They may celebrate it in a modern or in a traditional form, but they understand, that the praise of God and the responsibility for the world belong together, just as feasting and following Jesus, or the community and the forgiveness go together."¹⁴

We cannot divorce our daily bread from Christ as the bread of life. They both belong together.

Our candidates for Confirmation receive instructions about the Holy Communion. We discussed the story of Zachaeus the publican, asking, who does belong to the table of the Lord. Although there are oppositions like black and white people, healthy and handicapped people, poor and rich people, there was the request to challenge the contrast between the poor and the rich. For if people come together at the Lord's Table the solidarity with the poor should grow.

The celebration of the Eucharist does not permit to escape into a world of dreams and aesthetics, but calls to notice that believers belong together even if they are far away from each other.

Usually we pray in our cathedral on Sunday morning and Friday evening for the Fraternity in Jerusalem as well as for our twin-Cathedral in Durham in the North of England. Thus the congregation present takes part in the church world wide.

¹⁴ Forum Abendmahl 2, 1981, 7

Responsibility for the world and praising the Lord belong together. The reason lies in the simple gesture, which is the centre of the Eucharist: Jesus took the bread, gave thanks, broke it and gave it to his disciples.

A mediaeval book-painting shows us Jesus feeding the 5000. In the middle of the painting he hands the broken bread to the right and to the left of his disciples and they pass it on, too. It is a delightful movement, it shows the beauty of Christ's grace. By this gesture the disciples recognize the risen Christ: We receive, with thanks, bread and everything we need. Our opened hands are filled. We do not hold tight. God's kindness is sufficient for all, we can pass it on, and we still will have enough.

Luther said on Maundy Thursday 1523: The sacrament entails a double profit. One, it makes us to be a brother and co-heir of Christ in such a way that we become one cake with Christ. The other is that we also become one cake with one another. If you are poor, weak, or unhealthy then, if I am a Christian, I become a partaker of all your needs...all my life is for your sake.

In the Lutheran understanding there is a unity between the reception of the body of Christ and the fraternal community's becoming of the body of Christ. The two cannot be separated.

4 What are the Consequences when we celebrate the Divine Service as a Feast?

4.1 Careful Preparation of the Service

Lutheran theologians are educated to be preachers and teachers of the Church. But for some time it is noticed that this is not enough and people ask:

How can we join preparing to celebrate the presence of Christ among us?

Does the room look inviting?

Can we employ candles, flowers, music and silence? How we can we choose the music, the songs and chorals?

How does the community take part in the service?

Which gestures do express the salvation of peace?

What is the spiritual attitude when we prepare the service and enter the church?

Before churches were built, faithful persons assembled in their houses in order to celebrate Services. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts.¹⁵ There are experiences how to change the room of a sick person into a sanctuary: a white cloth, a candle, chalice and paten with bread and wine. In such a situation we have already celebrated the Eucharist as impressively as it might have been possible in our cathedrals.

Nevertheless, we have our cathedrals and churches which remind us that those are the meeting places with God. From ancient times until today, people come to our cathedrals to reassure themselves of the presence of God. Although they have many other experiences, it is here that they remark: "You are among us, O Lord, and we bear your name, do not forsake us."¹⁶

4.2 Who is the Host?

While the solemn character of the Protestant Church Service is recognized, it seems to be unclear who the host is. Many Pastors seem to regard themselves as being the founder of the Service, because they fail to notice the necessity of communicating properly. It can happen, for example, at the introductory sentence to the opening prayer that the Pastor says: "I invite you to pray with me." It sounds smooth and friendly, but it denies the fact that it is the congregation that celebrates the service. Long before the Pastor opened his mouth the congregation has come together following the invitation of Christ. People come together not to be asked in which way they wish to celebrate the Service, but in order to celebrate the presence of Christ and to answer with prayers and praises.

4.3 The Congregation Celebrates the Divine Service

"The Reformation made valid once more the priesthood of all faithful." Not every Christian is allowed to do everything. For the sake of love and order there are women and men ordained to be the spiritual leaders. The Protestant Church realised anew, that the whole congregation is responsible for the service, not only the Pastor. The service is not an arrangement, where you can notice a difference between the public and the reciting. Members of the congregation should take part. They have the option to join in the preparations for the Service. In my parish, for example, we read and discuss the biblical text for the coming Sunday in the weekly Bible lesson. Sometimes I am astonished about the spiritual competence of the laity.

¹⁵ Acta 2,46

Members of our church council serve as readers and assistants during the Church Service.

Members of our parish pray as intercessors and the congregation responds to their prayers with “Kyrie eleison”. On this occasion, in our cathedral we emphasize the importance of the Lutheran understanding of church: While the Pastors prepare the service, assisted by the organist, the choir and by the overseer or parish elders, the Service itself is celebrated by the whole congregation. As Pastors, we have a function but we are not the managers of the Service.

Also in the Protestant Church, however, we must find an answer to a world where more and more people distance themselves from faith and we must inquire whether a substitutional Service can be established. We as Pastors depend too much on the numbers of those who come.

Less income leads to economy. 50 years ago it was thought a parish must be sizable so that a Pastor knows everybody. Today often only 40 - 60% of the inhabitants belong to our church. Parishes merge. Some churches do not celebrate every Sunday, saying: too few people are coming, the Pastor is overburdened, a church musician is not available. This is too much fasting. Also this could be a Divine Service if, at the time of the Service, a Pastor, a member of the parish council, lights a candle, prays in his church and stays there for some time even if there is no congregation. And if only some people come, a grand Divine Service is not always necessary. Bell ringing, a morning hymn, a prayer, a reading, silence, the Lord's Prayer and a blessing: This would not be a feast but the Service would not have been cancelled. The Church would not be closed on Sunday. We in the Protestant Church will have to think about the Service in proxy. The Service does not need always to be carried out by Pastors only.

4.4 Divine Service Made to Measure

The new Lutheran prayer book deliberates the structure of the Divine Service clearly. It will be easily recognized by any Roman-Catholic or Anglican familiar with his own liturgy. However, the Lutheran liturgy provides freedom to stress certain parts of the service at certain times of the year. One Sunday, for example, there is an emphasis on the Kyrie, on another Sunday the Gloria is more prominent, or lamentations or the praising. There are prayers proposed for every day. You may use them verbatim, or you may add some phrases. Liturgy should not be read, but we should make it to be

¹⁶ Jer 14,9

our own. Therefore much time is required to prepare an entire service, and time certainly time does not only go into preparing the sermon. In the end, however, we hope that the service is solemn and will refresh the souls.

4.5. Fasting in Liturgy

Where the service is regarded as a feast and the “Today” (momentum?) is important, there is also importance given to fasting. This finds its expression in the “fasting of the liturgy.

Do you remember when I told you about the Easter Vigil, when the parish in Wuerttemberg economized on the “hallelujah” even on Easter Day? That congregation, I suppose, will sing, without hesitation, even for Lent, “Gloria in excelsis” and “hallelujah.” Perhaps they are of the opinion that it makes no sense to stop singing when commemorating the passion of Christ. Contrary to this, I think it supports the memory of Christ’s passion when the splendour of the service is diminished during the weeks before Christmas and Easter. During Lent, the singing of the “Gloria” and of the “hallelujah” is less frequent and even stops, there are no flowers on the altar and only a few candles are lightened. On Good Friday, the organ and the bells are silent. In some congregation everything is removed from the altar.

In the middle of the night, we begin the Easter Vigil in a dark church. In this situation, for about half an hour, we listen to the readings from the Old Testament, four out of twelve lessons are chosen. These passages belong to the night of salvation, and we listen to them waiting for God’s salvation, namely for the resurrection of Christ. Until then there is no glory of Easter. But when the light of one candle signifies the new life coming from Christ then Eastern starts and we sing: “Christ, our light!” This one candle lights all candles. Here we notice the preparation of the feast by fasting.

There is a time for everything: For feasting and for fasting. There is time for a solemn service with the reduction of its liturgy which characterises the expectation until the moment comes when the glory and jubilation of the great feasts of the ecclesiastical year are more and more marked and the time of feasting has come.