

December 9

This year's advent devotionals will feature readings from publications by Pittsburgh Theological Seminary faculty members. Today's reading comes from the book *Preaching Christian Doctrine* by William J. Carl III, President and Professor of Homiletics. It is published by Fortress Press and available through Cokesbury. Com.

This reading is found on Page 72:

In a sermon given during Advent one year, I took the phrase from the words of the institution, "You proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." (1 Cor. 11:26) and preached it with a Barthian-type structure. We were celebrating Holy Communion, so the sermon pointed not only to the table but to the coming of the Christ child. "You proclaim the Lord's death" became the first point on which I spoke. What an odd thing to focus on right before Christmas! Advent is not a time for sadness or remorse; it is a time for joy, for celebration. But if Christ is not seen as headed for Calvary, then he is just another child in a manger. Even the fourth verse of that popular Christmas hymn, "We Three Kings of Orient Are," speaks of Christ's death. So perhaps even at Christmastime, we should proclaim the Lord's death.

When we preach the sacraments, we preach the power of God: we preach Christ and Christ crucified. When we preach the sacraments to teach and correct, we should do so with vigor and joy and enthusiasm, trusting in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Prayer

Gracious God, your love has been made known to us in the manger, and on the cross. Let us rejoice in our salvation and open ourselves to the Spirit of life and new birth. Alleluia! Amen.