

## ADVENT 3

### THE COLLECT

**O LORD Jesus Christ, who at thy first coming didst send thy messenger to prepare thy way before thee; Grant that the ministers and stewards of thy mysteries may likewise so prepare and make ready thy way, by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, that at thy second coming to judge the world we may be found an acceptable people in thy sight, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Spirit ever, one God, world without end. Amen.**



1. Jesus Christ sent a \_\_\_\_\_ to prepare the way for His first coming.
2. What messenger did our Lord Jesus Christ send before His first coming?  
A. \_\_\_\_\_ (Luke 1:57-80)
3. To whom has He granted to make ready his way for His second coming?  
A. the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of His mysteries
4. Who are these ministers and stewards?  
A. the clergy of His Church (I Corinthians 4:1)
5. How are they to prepare His way?  
A. by \_\_\_\_\_ the hearts of the disobedient to the \_\_\_\_\_ of the just.
6. How are we to pray that we may be found at Christ's second coming?  
A. that we may be found an \_\_\_\_\_ people (I Tim 6:13-14)
7. With Whom does Christ live and reign?  
A. the \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_

### INTRODUCTION.

**An army has officers.** Christ's army is the Church, and its officers—? The clergy. Now the Collect of today teaches us to pray for them. What are they to do? Prepare for Christ's second coming just as St. John the Baptist did for His first coming. We pray for them today especially because this is one of the four Ember weeks during which the Church prays especially for her ministers. At this time men who want to be Christ's ministers are examined as to their fitness, and next Sunday those found fit will be ordained or commissioned.

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## I. ORIGIN

1. **Commenced by Christ.** Who called disciples and then chose twelve to be apostles (St. Luke 6:12-17), and at last sent them out with His commission and authority to work in His Name (St. John 20:21-24).
2. **Continued by Apostles.** Who ordained deacons (Acts 7), and also elders (Acts 14:23), and when they were soon to leave this world, ordained bishops to carry on their work (2 Tim.1:6, Titus 1:5).

## II. ORDERS.

1. **Ranks or degrees of Office.** In the Jews' religion, they had high priests, priests, and Levites. In Christ's time there was Christ Himself, apostles and disciples. In the apostles' time there were elders and deacons. Now the three chief orders are called— bishops, priests, and deacons.
2. **How are they appointed?** a. First they are *called by God*. God puts it into men's hearts, and guides their lives, and so shows them that He wants them to serve Him as His ministers. b. Then *they are chosen* when they have been examined both as to character and learning and found fit for the work (I Tim 3:10). c. Finally they are *commissioned* by those in authority in the church. This is called ordination, when the bishops lay hands on those to be ordained, and God gives them His Holy Spirit to enable them to fulfill their work. A man may be a good soldier but he is not an officer until he has received a commission. A man may be a good lawyer, but he is not a judge unless he is appointed by those in authority. So it is not a man's fitness but his ordination which actually makes him a bishop, priest, or deacon.

III. OFFICE. All have to prepare Christ's way; to warn people against sin; to help them to live holy lives; to bring them to Christ; and to help them to be like Christ.

1. **A bishop has to rule.** He is the head or chief of what is called a diocese (Acts 20:17-28, I Peter 5:1-2)
2. **A priest has to feed** God's people, which he does chiefly by preaching and reading God's Word, and by ministering the Sacraments (Acts 6:2-3, St. Matthew 10:7, 2 Timothy 2:24-25, and 3:2)
3. **A deacon has to serve;** to help the priest in his work.

*Officers are in most danger. The enemy tries hardest to kill them. So the devil tries most of all to tempt God's ministers, and therefore we must always pray for them.*



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