



# ABOUT THE PROPERS

*An Explanation of the Variable Parts of the Divine Service*



## Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

July 19, 2020



The Christian finds rest in Jesus

From the beginning of time, God provided rest for his creation. He blessed the seventh day and set it apart, that man might learn to find his rest in God alone. In Jesus, the Christian finds rest from his burdens, rest from his battles, and rest forever in heaven. <sup>1</sup>

### The Propers

*The Propers are those portions of the service that change (or, are “proper” to) each Sunday or season of the church year. The Propers differ from the Ordinary (from the Latin ordo, which means “regular order”) portions of the liturgy, which do not change (e.g. the Lord’s Prayer). The Propers offer the variety to the worship service and emphasize particular worship themes throughout the liturgical calendar.*

#### **First Lesson** <sup>1</sup>

Exodus 33:12-23

Can you hear the frustration in Moses’ voice? Can you sense the worry? Since their great fall with the golden calf, God had refused to go with the people of Israel. He would send an angel, but he himself would not accompany them. Moses pleaded with God to go up to the Promised Land with them. Though the Israelites had sinned greatly, Moses reminded the LORD that they were God’s people. God responded in grace and mercy and promised Moses that his very Presence would go with them, and he himself would give Moses rest. Can you hear the confidence in Moses’ voice after God’s promise? Can you sense the devotion? “Show me your glory!” Then God took this man yoked to him in faith and in service, and he showed Moses all the glory he could mortally bear.

#### **Second Lesson** <sup>1</sup>

Romans 7:15-25a

The Christian life is a battle between the sinful flesh and the new man born in us through baptism. The Old Adam wages constant war. Where can we find any rest from this kind of fight? Paul’s words ring true in our lives: all the good I want to do, but I fail to accomplish; all the evil I have promised never to do again, but repeat within a day. I want to do good, but I just can’t make it happen! What a wretched person I am! I just want rest from this battle—rest from my failure. Who can save me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord, who came to give rest to weary and burdened souls.

#### **Gospel of the Day** <sup>1</sup>

Matthew 11:25-30

Though they had seen many signs of Christ’s deity, Korazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum failed to repent. Jesus warned them of the coming wrath. Then he turned to his followers and praised God that the Lord of heaven and earth had revealed the truth of Jesus’ identity to the little children who believe in him. He has no words of judgment for his followers. He has only words of invitation, of comfort, of rest. Yes, the rest comes with a yoke—but look at whose yoke it is! Our Savior’s humble and gentle heart leads him to give us an easy yoke, a light burden, and rest for our souls. Christianity is not a religion of rules meant to impinge on our freedom; it does not call us to endlessly labor for God’s favor; it does not leave us to work things out on our own. No, it frees us from the burden of carrying our sin and puts Christ in its place. It connect us to Jesus that we might learn from him. It gives us the rest our weary souls so desperately need.

## Psalm of the Day

Psalm 145

In love, the Lord continues to be merciful to us and bless us. He will continue to bless us through many generations.

## Verse of the Day

Luke 8:15 (RSV)

“Happy are they who hear the Word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bring forth fruit with patience.” In the Parable of the Sower, Jesus uses the picture of seed sown on different types of ground to explain how people respond to the proclamation of the kingdom of God. Those who “hear the Word,” believe it, and produce fruit represent the seed that fell along the good soil and produced a good crop. The Spirit has created faith in the hearts of believers, making noble and good souls who, having been planted and fed by God’s Word, produce fruit in keeping with it.

## Prayer of the Day

God of all power and might, you are the giver of all that is good. Help us love you with all our heart, strengthen us in true faith, provide us with all we need, and keep us safe in your care; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

## Hymn of the Day

419 “If God Himself Be for Me” (Paul Gerhardt, 1607-76)

## Church Year Season <sup>1</sup>

Sundays after Pentecost

After reliving the great events of the life of Christ, the worshipping Church spends half a year focusing on the teachings of Christ. The Church wears green during the season of Pentecost as the Spirit uses those teachings of Jesus to grow the faith of believers. The appointed lessons teach us the characteristics of the Holy Ministry, the Christian, the Church, our God, and the Christian life.

## Colors & Symbolism

Sundays after Pentecost: Green

Green is the color of life, refreshment, growth, and regeneration. Whereas the first half of the Church Year (the “Festival Half” or the “Half Year of Our Lord”) focused on the life of Christ during his earthly ministry, the emphasis for the second half (the “Non-Festival half” or the “Half Year of the Church”) shifts to the result of Christ’s work through the Word: the work of defining and creating faith, and inspiring its fruits. The theme of the Christian’s growth in faith (like healthy green plants) fills the season.

## Nain Paraments

Sundays after Pentecost

**Superfrontal:** When Isaiah was called to be a prophet of the LORD, two seraphs (a class of angels) appeared and called out to one another, “Holy, Holy, Holy” (Isaiah 6:3). The threefold repetition of the divine adjective emphasizes the infinite holiness of the Triune God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Some congregations count the Sundays in this season of the Church Year as the Sundays after the festival of the Holy Trinity, calling it the “Trinity season,” or the “Sundays after Trinity.” That is why most paraments for this season feature symbols of the Holy Trinity.

**Lectern antependium:** The equilateral triangle is one of the oldest emblems of the Holy Trinity. The three equal sides and angles represent the equality, unity, and co-eternal nature of the three persons of the Trinity. Though they are three distinct persons, they are of one essence as one God (Deuteronomy 6:4). The three interwoven circles represent the three members of the Trinity and emphasize their unity and eternal nature; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are without beginning or end.

**Pulpit antependium:** At each point of the triangle (the significance of the triangle is explained above) is a nimbus, Latin for *cloud*. The nimbus appears as a circle, or a halo. In Christian artwork, nimbi surround the head of the Father (when he is depicted as a human), Jesus Christ, or the Holy Spirit (when he is depicted as a dove) to signify their glory and holiness. In artistic depictions of believers (saints), nimbi are placed around their heads to show that they have been made holy by God’s grace in Christ and through faith. The three fish in between the nimbi and that meet in the middle of the triangle signify Christians who are united to the Triune God by faith. Fish have come to represent the followers of Jesus because believers have been brought into the ship of God’s church through the efforts of those who proclaim Gospel (cf. “fishers of men” in Matthew 4:19).

<sup>1</sup> Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year A”. Jonathan E. Schroeder, Author and Editor.  
Clipart courtesy of “Ecclesiastical Art by Ed Riojas”