



ABOUT THE PROPERS

An Explanation of the Variable Parts of the Divine Service



The Coming of the Holy Spirit The Day of Pentecost May 31, 2020



God pours out his Holy Spirit

God's Old Testament people celebrated the gathering of the harvest at the Festival of Weeks. On the fiftieth day, God sent the promised Counselor on the day we call "Pentecost" (Greek for "fifty" from Lev 23:15). This day marked the birthday of the New Testament Church and celebrates the harvest of souls won by the Son and gathered by his servants empowered by his Spirit. Pentecost is the third great festival of the Church and has been commemorated since at least 217 A.D. The Church dresses in red to remind us of the tongues of fire that marked the Spirit's gift and the blood of the martyrs which was the seed of the Church. This day culminates the Season of Easter when our risen Lord now empowers his people to be witnesses of the resurrection for the world.

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 Lesson¹

Joel 2:28-29

In the Old Testament God poured out his Spirit on the prophets and so revealed his will through visions and dreams. In Numbers 11, God anointed the 70 elders with his Spirit so that they prophesied. When Moses' young aide loyally objected to some of the elders prophesying in the camp, Moses said, "I wish that all the LORD's people were prophets and that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!" The prophet Joel said that one day, Moses' wish would be fulfilled. But when? "Afterward," in the Messianic age, in the last age of the earth that began on the day God kept the promise of Joel and the wish of Moses and put his Spirit on all his people.

Second Lesson¹

Acts 2:1-21

The Church follows in the footsteps of Christ who was prepared for his ministry by a dramatic, visible outpouring of the Spirit at his baptism. Jesus kept his promise to baptize them with the Holy Spirit and with fire. The real miracle of Pentecost is the transformative gift of the Holy Spirit, taking timid followers of Jesus and making them bold witnesses who carried the Gospel to the world. The sound of the violent wind served as a sign, but was not the gift. The tongues of fire marked its arrival, but they were not the gift. Miraculously speaking in foreign languages was a result, but it was not the gift. "All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit." Moses wished it; Joel foretold it; the disciples lived it. The sin that had scattered mankind at Babel had been atoned. The last age of the earth (vv 19-21) wouldn't be marked by the dividing of the peoples, but by their uniting into the Church of Christ where there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female.

Gospel of the Day¹

John 16:5-11

How could Jesus' departure be advantageous for the disciples? Only when Jesus had finished his redemptive work and returned to the Father would he send the Counselor. At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit fulfilled this promise of Jesus as the Counselor who would work on the world by dwelling in his disciples. His great work is to convict the world in regard to sin, righteousness and judgment. As the Holy Spirit prompted the disciples to preach the Gospel, both believers and unbelievers heard and were convicted in regard to sin—resulting in either repentance or obduracy. The Holy Spirit convicts the world in regard to righteousness, because the purchase price for

righteousness had now been paid, (“I am going to the Father”), and the world would either receive it by faith or reject it in unbelief. The Holy Spirit convicts the world in regard to judgment, because although the world has not yet been judged, its ruler has (Revelation 20). The preaching of the Gospel never leaves hearts the same: by either quickening or hardening, the Spirit convicts mankind.

Psalm of the Day Psalm 51b

“Take not your Holy Spirit from me.” We continue to pray that the Holy Spirit comes to us to strengthen our faith and guide us in holy living.

Verse of the Day

“Alleluia. Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful people, and kindle in them the fire of your love. Alleluia.” (*From the antiphon: Come, Holy Spirit*)

Prayer of the Day

Holy Spirit, God and Lord, come to us this joyful day with your sevenfold gift of grace. Rekindle in our hearts the holy fire of your love that in a true and living faith we may tell abroad the glory of our Savior, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Father, one God, now and forever.

Hymn of the Day 176 “Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord” (German hymn, 15th cent; Martin Luther, 1483-1546)

Church Year Season ¹ 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 The Day of Pentecost: Red

Red, the color of fire, is the color for the Festival of Pentecost. It signifies the appearance of what looked like tongues of fire over them when the Holy Spirit descended at the first Pentecost. The color red is also used for festivals of renewal in the Holy Spirit, such as Reformation, missions, and ordination. The color also reminds us of the blood of the martyrs – the believers of every generation who by the power of the Holy Spirit hold firm to the true faith even at the cost of their lives.

Minor Festivals The Visitation (May 31)

Nain Paraments Pentecost Sunday

Superfrontal: The Holy Spirit is often represented as a dove, recalling Jesus’ baptism when the Spirit descended from heaven “like a dove” (Matthew 3:16). The dove also reminds us of the Coming of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, when the apostles were baptized with the Spirit and with fire. The flames represent the tongues of fire that rested on the Apostles on Pentecost Sunday as they were “filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:4). To the left and right are the letters *Alpha* (Α) and *Omega* (Ω), the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. These two letters symbolize Jesus Christ, our eternal Lord and Savior, who is the first and the last, the beginning and the end (Revelation 22:13).

Lectern antependium: The shell with drops of water represents Holy Baptism. Ancient pictures of Jesus’ baptism show John the Baptist pouring water from a shell upon Jesus’ head as he stood in the waters of the Jordan River. Nothing in the Bible is said about John using a shell to apply water on Jesus, but the picture of a shell has long since been used in the Church to symbolize this sacrament of initiation into God’s Church. In some churches today baptisms are performed by pouring water from a shell.

Pulpit antependium: The book in front of the cross represents God’s Word in the Holy Bible. The main content of Holy Scripture is the good news of forgiveness of sins through the death of Jesus Christ, our Savior (John 20:31; 1Corinthians 1:23). The significance of the Greek letters *Alpha* (Α) and *Omega* (Ω) is explained above in the description of the superfrontal.

[The significance of the crosses on the lectern and pulpit antependium is explained below]

The Cross is the most recognizable symbol for Jesus, his Church, his sacrificial death, and his victory over sin and death. The apostle St. Paul used the image of the cross as a way to sum up the Gospel of God’s saving work through Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 1:18; Galatians 6:14). On the cross, God’s Son suffered and died to pay for the sins of the world. By God’s grace and through faith, we are cleansed by Christ’s blood (Hebrews 10:10).

¹ Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year A”. Jonathan E. Schroeder, Author and Editor.
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