



# ABOUT THE PROPER

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



## Fifth Sunday in Lent

March 22, 2026



Exactly What I Need: Life

The Fifth Sunday in Lent is traditionally known as “Judica” Sunday. The Sunday derives its name from the Latin words of the Introit (i.e. the opening verses) of the day: “Judge me justly (*judica*), O God, and plead my case against an ungodly nation” (Psalm 43:1 a).

We confess in the Apostles’ Creed, “I believe in the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.” When we speak these words, we are stating our belief that one day Jesus will raise our bodies to join our souls in heaven. God promises to reunite you with your believing loved ones so you will enjoy the paradise of heaven forever with them! How do we know that God can and will keep this promise? Not only did he raise people from the dead during biblical times, but Jesus himself descended into the darkness of death on Good Friday and emerged on Easter Sunday as the first fruit of the resurrection of all God’s people. Yet again, Jesus, the Lord of Life, satisfies our greatest needs.

### Prayer of the Day

Eternal God and Father, help us to remember Jesus, who obeyed your will and bore the cross for our salvation, that through his anguish, pain, and death we may receive the forgiveness of sins, victory over the grave, and finally inherit eternal life; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

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

2 Kings 4:17-37

The story is heartbreaking: a barren woman gives birth to a promised child. All her hopes and love wrapped themselves up in this little boy, until the day his head hurt. He died in his mother’s lap while she rocked him. Can you imagine the tears? Death is the bitter lot we inherited from Adam. But God wants us to know that even in the face of a death as heartrending as this, he promises that whoever believes in him will live, even though he dies. So he lets Elisha pay an advance on the inheritance waiting for the coheirs of Christ, that we might know and believe that Jesus one day will raise us from death to life.

### Second Reading <sup>1</sup>

Romans 8:11-19

The indwelling of the Spirit proves our possession of the crown jewel of the kingdom, the resurrection from the dead. If the Spirit is in us, God will most certainly grant true and real life to our mortal bodies. The truth of the protasis in verse 11 is evidenced by our lives. When the Spirit works fruits in our life, he proves to us that he dwells within us. If the protasis is true, then the apodasis is equally true: God will give us life. The knowledge of our future glory lets us approach God without fear and bear suffering as children of God and coheirs with Christ.

### Gospel <sup>1</sup>

John 11:17-27, 38-45

Jesus performed the greatest miracle of his ministry to prove to us the certainty of his greatest promise. Death has hounded mankind since the garden and caused misery that God never intended for his children. When Christ saw the effects of death on his loved ones, he wept with them, but also promised them that one day even this last enemy would be defeated. Martha, too often remembered for her busyness, should be remembered for her confession of faith—so complete, so noble—that encompassed everything Jesus had preached. It even encompassed teachings the disciples struggled to comprehend! She believed in Jesus’ promise of a future resurrection, and so Jesus gave proof to her and to us that his promise is true. By that same faith, he will give to us the crown jewel of the kingdom. The one who *is* resurrection and life will also *give* resurrection and life to all who believe. Jesus’ victory in this battle with death was a forgone conclusion: he thanked God for it in advance. But Lazarus’ response to the command of Christ stirs the heart of every Christian who has stared at the ugly face of death: the dead man came out.

Psalm of the Day <sup>4</sup>                      Psalm 130 B                      “Remember Your Mercy, O LORD”

The Church sings Psalm 130 in services that emphasize repentance and forgiveness through faith in Jesus. It is the 11<sup>th</sup> of the 15 songs of ascents (Psalms 120-134) and the 6<sup>th</sup> of the 7 penitential psalms (Psalms 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143). Martin Luther said, “Psalm 130 is a prayer psalm. The psalmist confesses that no one is righteous before God, and that no one can become righteous by their own works and righteousness. People can only become righteous through grace and the forgiveness of sins, which God has promised. The psalmist prophesies Christ in verse 8, and the entire psalm is based on this promise.”

Gospel Acclamation                      John 11:25

(Jesus said) “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me will live, even though they die.”

Hymn of the Day                      571 “O God, O Lord of Heaven and Earth” (Martin Franzmann, 1907-1976)

Minor Festivals                      The Annunciation of Our Lord (March 25)

This festival commemorates the angel Gabriel’s announcement to the Virgin Mary that she would give birth to the incarnate Son of the Most High, Jesus (Luke 1:26-38). The festival originated in Constantinople and was accepted in Rome about 600 A.D. Marking the first moment of the Christ’s Incarnation, it was designated for March 25<sup>th</sup>, nine months before Christmas Day.

Church Year Season <sup>2</sup>                      Lent

The season of Lent leads the Church on a forty-day journey of repentance and prayer, of remembrance and renewal of our baptism. God calls to mankind: Return to the Lord! The journey begins with Ash Wednesday’s warning of mortality and culminates at the Service of Holy Baptism in the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday.

The Church’s Lenten worship is muted and quiet. For centuries, the Church has omitted her most jubilant songs of praise during this season of repentance (e.g. the “Gloria in Excelsis,” and the use of the word “Alleluia”) to reflect the somber nature of the season. Note, however, that the Sundays are designated as Sunday in Lent, not Sundays of Lent. The Sundays themselves are not considered part of the forty days, but are islands of refreshment in our Lenten walk.

Colors & Symbolism                      Lent: Purple or Violet

These colors are a sign of royalty, self-discipline, sorrow and repentance. Purple also reminds us of sacrifice, not only because that colored clothing was very expensive (sacrifice of money), but also because in order to make purple clothing in ancient times, one had to dye the cloth in the blood of snails (sacrifice of life). Thus purple is a fitting color for the penitential season of Lent, during which we focus more intentionally on our sinfulness, and how our King and Savior, Jesus Christ suffered in our place and sacrificed himself on the cross to take away our sins.

Nain Paraments                      Lent

Superfrontal: The lamb at the center of the parament represents Jesus, the Lamb of God who was sacrificed to take away the sin of the world (John 1:29; 3:16-17). The nimbus (halo) around its head reminds us that Jesus was a perfect sacrifice, even greater than the unblemished lambs required of the Passover meal (Exodus 12:5).

The palm branches remind us of Jesus’ triumphant entry into Jerusalem on the Sunday before he died (John 12:13). Palm branches were used in celebration of victory. Jesus entered Jerusalem to conquer sin, death, and the devil. Our crucified and risen Lord assures us in his Word that his victory is ours by faith (1 Corinthians 15:57).

[The significance of the crosses on the far left and right of the superfrontal are explained below]

Lectern & Pulpit antependia: The cross formed by four nails represents Jesus’ death by which he was nailed to the cross (Luke 23:33; John 20:25,27). The white sash around the arms of the cross symbolizes Jesus’ righteousness and his perfect victory over our enemies through his resurrection (Romans 4:25; 1 Corinthians 15:20-23:54-57).

<sup>1</sup> Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year A”. Jonathan E. Schroeder, Author.

<sup>2</sup> Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year B”. Daniel M. Deutschlander, Author.

<sup>3</sup> Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year C”. Joel J. Gawrisch, Author.

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