



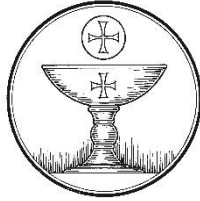
ABOUT THE PROPER

An Explanation of the Variable Parts of the Divine Service



Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

August 11, 2024



I Am the Bread of Life

Spiritual Food for Those Focused on the Earthly

Physical food is a blessing from God without which we would literally wither away and die. That is why Jesus lovingly fed thousands of followers with the bread and the fish. Yet, while physical food is a good thing, it is far from the greatest thing God provides us. The greatest blessing God provides is spiritual food. The best thing God gives us is his Son, the Bread of Life. Without that spiritual food, we wither and die in a much worse way.

This week we see the multitudes coming to Jesus looking for two things: ever more temporal blessings – full stomachs, healthy bodies – and an explanation of how to gain them. Jesus explains the greater need for spiritual food. He assures us that there is nothing we do to earn it. Our Father urges us to come to him for our daily bread, asking him to provide for our temporal needs. But may we hunger most for our greatest need: spiritual food that Christ freely gives.

First Reading²

Exodus 16:15-31

People would still like it today if God gave everything temporal like manna from heaven. And if it happened they would behave no differently than the Israelites did: they would eat their fill and be not one bit fuller for it; they would still starve for their failure to see the true Bread from heaven. Note the point of God's generosity even in temporal bread: *Then you will know that I am the LORD your God.* That is always the point of God's invisible hand giving visible blessings, that we may see behind them nothing but the power of God and the grace of the Savior. Each day look at his various visible gifts and give thanks for them as evidence of his tender love for you and his compassion for every circumstance of your life with him, your God and Savior. For he sustains the body with the perishable, so that he may fill the soul with himself.

Second Reading²

1 Corinthians 10:1-5, 11-13

Make no mistake about it. God wants you to get the point of the readings for this Sunday and to take seriously all of his Word. If we live only for what we can see and delight only in the visible blessings of God without reference to him as their source, we, too, will perish. We will have no one to blame but ourselves. God in his visible blessings and in his protecting providence has been more than generous, giving us all that we need to avoid that terrible fate and to live joyously in his presence now and forever.

Gospel²

John 6:24-35

People eat the loaves and are filled! They think no further about it than to look forward to the next filling. But Jesus' miracle was a sign, i.e., something that pointed beyond the thing itself to something higher and more important, namely to the truth that he is the Son of God and the Savior. As such he has power to satisfy the needs of the body; but he always does it to remind us that the greater satisfaction is the food for the soul that gives eternal refreshment. Say, "Thank you," at the table. In doing so remember the greater food in the banquet of his Word and sacrament. That will make the eating of the perishable food he gave all the more enjoyable because of the greater food to which it points, and the generosity and grace of the one who gives both in such rich measure.

Psalm of the Day⁴

Psalm 34 B

“Taste, O Taste”

The Church sings Psalm 34 in services reassuring believers that the Lord will provide for them in times of need. Martin Luther said, “Psalm 34 is another psalm of thanksgiving. It uses an episode from the life of David to show us that God never despises the prayers of his believers.”

Gospel Acclamation

John 6:35

“Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”

Prayer of the Day

Merciful Father, you gave your Son Jesus as the heavenly bread of life. Grant us faith to feast on him in your Word and sacraments that we may be nourished unto life everlasting; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Hymn of the Day

923 “Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah” (William Williams, 1717-1791)

Church Year Season¹

Season 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 cover a great body of doctrine for faith and life.

Colors & Symbolism

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.

Minor Festivals

St. Mary, Mother of Our Lord (August 15)

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).

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

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

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

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