



ABOUT THE PROPERS

An Explanation of the Variable Parts of the Divine Service



Second Sunday after Pentecost

June 14, 2020



The Holy Ministry Stands on the Rock-Solid Truth of God's Word

Not all who call themselves ministers do that, so watch out for false teachers! Many will come with wise sounding words and pious promises, but they are not what they seem. The Church's only defense is to stand firmly on the rock-solid truth of God's Word. The Season of Pentecost explicates the teachings of Christ and the application of faith in the life of the Christian. How fitting that this initial Sunday lays the foundation for that teaching and life: the inspired Word of God. ¹

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 ¹ Deuteronomy 11:18-21, 26-28

The words of this lesson inscribed on parchment have filled the phylacteries of Jewish people for thousands of years. Though they tied them to their hands and bound them to their foreheads, they failed to fix the Word of God in their hearts and minds. And so when the Word made flesh stood before them, they could not see the Messiah long promised. The teachers of Israel became false prophets, phylacteries and all. When God spoke these words through the ministry of Moses, he meant for them to have a home in our hearts, rather than just tied to our heads. Moses proclaimed the Word that gives both promise and warning. When the Israelites retold the blessing and the curse, they did it next to Mt. Gerizim and Mt. Ebal. The mountains stood as a timeless testimony that there are only two choices: the rock-solid truth of God's Word that brings fruitful life or the barren words of the false teachers that lead to nothing but death. How do we prepare ourselves to watch out for false teachers? We fix this rock-solid truth in our hearts and minds.

Second Lesson ¹ Romans 3:21-25a, 27, 28

This lesson begins a series of readings through the Epistle to the Romans. For sixteen weeks, the Second Lesson will follow Paul's dissertation on righteousness through faith. In the context of this Sunday and its lessons, the point here is the content of the rock-solid truth proclaimed by the Holy Ministry. Namely, that only through Christ's cross could both the Law and the Gospel be upheld. Only through Christ's cross could all God's words be kept. Only through Christ's cross could God be both just and justifier. Only through Christ's cross could man be justified by faith. That is rock-solid truth.

Gospel of the Day ¹ Matthew 7:15-29

The Sermon on the Mount closes with this admonition of our Lord: "Small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few will find it." The Gospel for today gives a reason so few will find that road: the deceptions of false teachers. Jesus warns the Church that no false prophet ever comes claiming to be one. We cannot judge them only by their actions—even Judas performed miracles. Outward power or piety merely masks the beast within false teachers. We must rather judge them by their fruit: not merely their moral

lives, but the fruit of a prophet is his message. What does he say? He may speak it in the name of Jesus, but look at the prophet's fruit, his message. The mark of a man on the narrow road, the mark of a true teacher is one who hears the words of Christ puts them into practice. That foundation of rock-solid truth can withstand any storm. True ministers of the Word proclaim the truth and put Christ's words into practice.

Psalm of the Day Psalm 78

The Lord proclaims his Word to us that we might be saved and pass the good news on to our children and to future generations.

Verse of the Day Psalm 119:105

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path." God's Word is the only rule according to which all doctrine should be judged. God's Word enlightens our hearts through faith to understand his work of salvation for us and guide us through life.

Prayer of the Day

O God, you rule over all things in wisdom and kindness. Take away everything that may be harmful and give us whatever is good; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Hymn of the Day 190 "We Now Implore God the Holy Ghost" (German hymn, 13th c. v1; Martin Luther, vv2-4)

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 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).

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