



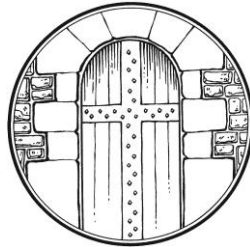
ABOUT THE PROPERS

An Explanation of the Variable Parts of the Divine Service



Fifth Sunday of Easter

May 10, 2020



Jesus Christ is the Way, and the Truth, and the Life

The Fifth Sunday of Easter has traditionally been called “*Cantate*” Sunday. It derives its name from the Latin words of the Introit of the day from Psalm 98:1, “Sing (“*Cantate*”) to the LORD a new song, for he has done marvelous things.” Christ’s message is so exclusive that it rejects all others. There is only one way to the Father, and that way is a *person*. He does not say, ‘I show you the way,’ like a second Moses, but I am the way. Nor ‘I have the truth,’ like another Elijah, but I am the truth. Not only ‘I lead unto life,’ as one of his apostles, but I am the life. (Kögel) The exclusivity of salvation resting in the person of Jesus Christ is a rock against which the unbelieving world crushes itself, but upon which God builds his Church.

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

Acts 17:1-12

Paul said it was necessary for God to hide himself in suffering. All the popular conceptions of Messiah as earthly king were wrong. Not only did Messiah suffer and die, Messiah had to suffer and die! All the prophesies found their fulfillment in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. The exclusivity of the Christian message led to vociferous rejection by the people of Israel, both at home and abroad. But the stone the builders rejected has made a new people, a chosen people, a people filled with eagerness and hope in Christ.

Second Lesson¹

1 Peter 2:4-10

The world looks at God hidden in Christ and sees either a loser or a joke (1 Corinthians 1). The Jews rejected him because of his humility. The world today rejects him because of his claims of being the one way, the one truth, the one life. In neither case do they see Christ as the stone that should set their angles or head their corners. They would rather fashion their lives by their own design. This rejected stone, however, will ultimately be their downfall. For believers, though, this rejected stone is what saves and builds. Jesus said, “I AM the life.” That living stone is Life, gives life, and makes living stones out of people who were scattered in darkness.

Gospel of the Day¹

John 14:1-12

Jesus bids farewell to his disciples on the night he was betrayed. He tries to set their hearts at rest and tells them to trust God and him regarding this departure. But the disciples’ faith is clouded by doubt and false hopes. Thomas cannot conceive of a Messianic kingdom that involves death or departure. They did not want to see God in sufferings, but in glory. Philip, like us all, wanted to see the Father. Show us the glory cloud! Show us the fiery mountain! Show us the sapphire pavement! Show us the throne ringed by cherubim and seraphim! Show us the Father! Sinful man wants to look right past this man from Galilee. Sinful man fails to see the truth expressed in Luther’s thesis, the truth so crucial to the theology of the cross: the hidden God reveals himself by hiding himself. There is only one way, and that way is a person. Jesus points Thomas and Philip to the one person who reveals the hidden God to us. Let the preacher note the definite articles in verse 6. We are tempted to think there must be more than this humble man from Galilee. Oh, there is! Look closer and see the hidden God. See grace in the flesh—the God of glory willing to hide himself unto death for me.

Psalm of the Day

Psalm 33

The Church sings of her heavenly Bridegroom, who upholds all things by his Word for the sake of his Bride.

Verse of the Day

John 14:6

Alleluia. Alleluia. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia. "I am the way, the truth, and the life, says the Lord." Alleluia. On Maundy Thursday, Jesus was preparing his disciples for his ascension to heaven. After saying he was "going there to prepare a place" for his disciples, Thomas asked, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" Jesus replied, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." With another "I AM" statement, Christ declares himself as God, who is the way to heaven, the absolute truth, and the source and giver of life everlasting.

Prayer of the Day

O God, you form the minds of your faithful people into a single will. Make us love what you command and desire what you promise, that among the many changes of this world, our hearts may ever yearn for the lasting joys of heaven; 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

141 "At the Lamb's High Feast We Sing" (Latin hymn, 17th century)

We praise our King Jesus for providing his blood as the payment for our sins and for the victory he has won over our enemies. Because of Christ's saving work, God has prepared us as a beautifully dressed bride for her husband Jesus, and welcomes us to the wedding supper of the Lamb in heaven. We enjoy a foretaste of this heavenly High Feast in the Lord's Supper as we receive his body and blood for our forgiveness.

Church Year Season ¹

Easter

After forty days of repentance and prayer, the Church bursts forth in jubilant praise at the Resurrection of our Lord. The alleluias and glorias which were muted for Lent ring out again as the Bride of Christ welcomes her Bridegroom back from the dead. Easter is as the pinnacle of the Church Year, the oldest festival and season celebrated by the worshipping Church. For a full week-of-weeks (49 days) the Church celebrates the resurrection of Christ on the Sundays of Easter which culminate on the 50th day, Pentecost.

Colors & Symbolism

Easter: White

White is the color of our Triune God and heaven. It also symbolizes joy, celebration, gladness, light, purity and innocence. We receive these blessings through faith because Christ, our righteousness Savior, has forgiven all our sins.

Traditions

The Paschal Candle

Paschal, meaning "having to do with the Passover," is a word associated with Easter. It was at the conclusion of the Jewish Passover Festival (the "Pasch") that Jesus rose from the dead and proved himself to be the true Passover Lamb whose blood removes sin and death (Ex 12; 1 Cor 6:6-8). The candle is lit for services during Easter to symbolize that Christ is alive and lives among us. The candle is also lit for Baptisms and funerals, reminding us of our resurrection to eternal life.

Nain Paraments

Easter

Superfrontal: *Alleluia* is taken from a Hebrew word which means, "Praise the LORD." It is a word of joy and gladness and most commonly used in the Psalms (e.g. 103). An ancient custom is to refrain from using the term during Lent in order to distinguish the penitential nature of that season from the joy and hope filled nature of the Easter season that follows. The vines and vegetation branching out from the *Alleluia* represent the spiritual life that Jesus, the vine brings to God's children, the branches (John 15:5).

Lectern antependium: The doves flying in front of the cross represent purity, innocence (Matthew 10:16), as well as spiritual and eternal rest (Psalm 55:6). When the dove has an olive branch or leaf in its beak, it is a symbol of hope and peace (Genesis 8:11). Each of these blessings and more come by Jesus' death on the cross and through the gift of faith (Galatians 1:3,4).

Pulpit antependium: The cross is formed by the Greek letters Chi (X) and Rho (P). Chi and Rho are the first two letters in the Greek word for Christ (Χριστός). This ancient symbol represents Jesus and his office as the Messiah, the anointed King of kings and Savior of the world (Matthew 16:16). The vines and vegetation branching out from the cross represent the spiritual life that Jesus, the vine brings to God's children, the branches (John 15:5).

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