



ABOUT THE PROPERS

An Explanation of the Variable Parts of the Divine Service



Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

July 5, 2020



The Holy Ministry preaches Christ in spite of persecution

Christ promises courage for his witnesses to testify even in the face of pain or persecution. The Prayer of the Day is one of the most ancient in the Church's use. It seems to have been suggested by the disasters of the dying Western Empire. As Rome crumbled, the Church prayed for God's governance that she might worship in peace and joy. Today Christ reminds us that even when that peace and joy are absent, he will give us the courage to continue to testify in his name. 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

Jeremiah 20:7-13

Persecution can come from any quarter. For Jeremiah, it came from within the visible church. Passhur, the chief officer of the temple, heard the message Jeremiah proclaimed and had him beaten and put into stocks. How telling that the first time the Bible calls Jeremiah by the title "prophet" is also the first time he faces bodily persecution! Proclaimers of the pure Word of God will always face persecution from without and within the visible church. But what could Jeremiah do? He could not hold in the Word because it was like a fire in his heart. He did his job and found his courage in the mighty warrior of the Lord and the knowledge that God will prevail. In the face of persecution, Jeremiah found courage, praise and joy.

Second Lesson ¹

Romans 5:12-15

This is the fourth in a series of sixteen lessons that run through Pentecost 17. When the first Adam listened to the Serpent's lies, life and holiness disappeared from God's perfect creation, and into the vacuum left behind rushed sin and death. By one act the first Adam ushered in an age where sin ruled and death reigned. Even the life of mortal man could only be called a life of death deferred. But the second Adam came! By his one epoch-changing act, the life of death deferred became a life of death destroyed. No wonder Satan tries to silence the proclaimers of this message with persecution!

Gospel of the Day ¹

Matthew 10:24-33

Jesus' axiomatic statements are so obvious that they require no proof. Yet how surprised we are when we face persecution because of the Word! Perhaps we face physical persecution, or perhaps it is merely the way modern Christians are called intolerant, credulous, backward. But why should Christians be surprised or disappointed or angered about the persecutions they face? Look at the axiom! We slaves are not above our master who was persecuted first. So this should not lead to surprise and cannot lead to the cessation of our work as Gospel heralds. We know our master and the reality of who he actually is, not just the falsities his enemies promulgate. And therefore, do not be afraid of them! Instead, shout and proclaim! Our enemies can only succeed in killing the body. Such a small thing compared to the fate that awaits them! The enemies of Christ have always been fearsome, whether in the days of the crumbling of the Roman Empire

or during these latter days of American hegemony. That's why Christ says it three times, do not be afraid. In place of fear, find the courage of Christ to witness in the face of any persecution.

Psalm of the Day Psalm 31

This is often the prayer of those who are faithful. That God still delivers his own and remains faithful to his promises is the strength of those who bear the cross. In that confidence they encourage their fellow cross bearers.

Verse of the Day Galatians 4:6

“Because we are his children; God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’ The promise God kept to send his Son to redeem us has transformed us from slaves to sons and heirs (Gal 4:4). The surety of God’s promises kept provides the certainty of our coming inheritance (Gal 4:5). The Holy Spirit leads God’s children through faith to know God as their very own “Abba” (Aramaic for *Father*) and call him by name.

Prayer of the Day

O Lord, our God, govern the nations on earth and direct the affairs of this world so that your Church may worship you in peace and joy; 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 188 “Creator Spirit, by Whose Aid” (Rhabanus Maurus, 776-856)

Church Year Season¹ 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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