



# ABOUT THE PROPERS

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



Sixth Sunday in Lent

**Palm Sunday**

April 5, 2020



The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified

The hour for Christ's glory had come. He would not, however, gain glory in the manner of other kings. Rather, he would humble himself in great acts of love for us (even to the point of death!), and then the Heavenly Father would exalt him to the highest place, because he had fulfilled God's mission to save as the sacrificial Lamb of God. With repentant hearts we join our Lord's triumphant entry into Jerusalem, confident in his all atoning sacrifice to take away our sins, and hailing him as our Eternal King. "Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord!"

## 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**<sup>1</sup>                      Zechariah 9:9,10

Zechariah tells Jerusalem to rejoice when the messianic King comes to her, because he will have with him the righteousness she needs and the salvation she craves. This King would surpass the glory and power of all Israel's kings before him. King David's rule extended to the River Euphrates at its farthest—but this King's rule would extend from the Euphrates to the very ends of the earth, from sea to sea. His worldwide kingdom would mean the end of war and the advent of peace. All this he would do not with an army, but with his person—not with violence, but with gentleness. Rejoice, daughter of Zion! Your King comes to you. Hail him!

**Second Lesson**<sup>1</sup>                      Philippians 2:5-11

Jesus is our King, but he came humbly to save us. Though true God, he became man. Though all powerful, he became a servant. Though immortal and eternal, he died. He not only laid aside his glory, but he took our shame upon him. He not only humbled himself, but he died as one who was cursed. Yet in this great humility, he won the peace of forgiveness for us. The King came humbly because he wasn't on the way to a throne in Jerusalem, but to a hill called Golgotha where he would fulfill God's mission and save his people. Therefore, God would give him glory greater than his humiliation—every creature will bow the knee and hail him: Jesus Christ is Lord!

**Gospel of the Day**<sup>1</sup>                      Matthew 21:1-11

The great King comes to his city and to his temple! He could have come with all the power and glory of the Son of God. He could have ridden a thunderstorm as his chariot with legions of angels striding beside him and creation itself singing forth the praise of its Maker. But look how he comes: Not on the storm, but on a donkey; not accompanied by heavenly warriors, but by fishermen with a spotty record of faith; not to the sound of creation singing, but to the shouts of fickle pilgrims who cheered him on Sunday but would desert him by Friday. Why did he come so humbly? Because he came not to rule us, but to save us. He came, not to command us, but to invite us. He came not to demand anything from us, but to give everything for us. He comes in the name of the Lord to save us.

**Psalm of the Day**

Psalm 24

The Lord Almighty enters into Zion, and those whose sins have been washed away join together in celebration. We lift up our heads as we see our salvation approaching.

**Verse of the Day**

John 12:23

“The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.” Jesus spoke these words on Palm Sunday before the crowds who had gathered to see him. The time had come for him to die for fallen mankind and rise again in glory.

**Prayer of the Day**

We praise you, O God, for the great acts of love by which you redeemed us through your Son, Jesus Christ. As he was acclaimed by those who scattered their garments and branches of palm in his path, so may we always hail him as our King and follow him with perfect confidence; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Hymn of the Day**

133 “Ride On, Ride On in Majesty” (Henry H. Milman, 1791-1868)

The hymn’s themes of victory (“majesty”) and tragedy are juxtaposed to illustrate Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem. Christ is hailed with “Hosanna” as he rides forth to die (vv1-2). The angels look with sadness at Jesus’ sacrifice (v3); the Father eagerly awaits his Son (v4). Jesus bows in meekness to pain, but will ascend to power and reign in glory once again (v5).

**Church Year Season**<sup>1</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**

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).

The Cross is the most recognizable symbol for Jesus, his Church, his sacrificial death, and his victory over sin and death. The apostle St. Paul used the image of the cross as a way to sum up the Gospel of God’s saving work through Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 1:18; Galatians 6:14). On the cross, God’s Son suffered and died to pay for the sins of the world. By God’s grace and through faith, we are cleansed by Christ’s blood (Hebrews 10:10).

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