



# ABOUT THE PROPERS

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



## Holy Trinity

May 26, 2024



*A Top-Down Faith*

Only a Triune God Can Deliver What Only a Triune God Can Offer

Scripture teaches that there is only one God. Yet that God exists as three distinct persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Incomprehensible! It is the type of teaching about which the psalmist declares, “Such knowledge is too wonderful for me. It is too high – I cannot grasp it” (Psalm 139:6). We believe in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity without fully comprehending it simply because that is how God reveals himself to us in Scripture and he has given us the gift of faith to trust his Word. Our belief in the Triune God came from the top down.

### The Propers

*The Propers are those portions of the service that change (i.e. 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 Reading**<sup>2</sup>

Isaiah 6:1-8

In bringing us into his kingdom, the Holy Trinity employs both the law and the gospel. The law shows us God in all his majesty and terror; it kills us and makes us despair of our own goodness, even of the vain delusion that we enter his kingdom by our merit or decision. No, it is all his work and doing when he forgives our sins by purging that comes from his altar, ultimately the altar of the cross. Then, moved by the gospel, we both trust in him and desire to serve him in his kingdom in accord with what he will say in his Word — not on the basis of our own feelings or reasoning.

#### **Second Reading**<sup>2</sup>

Romans 8:12-17

In that kingdom of the Father, created by the work of the Son and brought to us by the Spirit in the gospel, we are not fear-driven slaves. No, so great is the love described in the gospel lesson that God even makes us his adopted sons. We are brothers of Christ the King, children of God the Father, impelled to live and work and pray by the Spirit who lives and works and prays within us. As sons we strive to live not according to our old lusts and desires, but as befits those whose Father is God, whose brother is Christ, whose leader is the Spirit in the Word. Paul is not a sexist with his use of the word *sons*; he is describing a relationship not just of children but of *heirs*; and that’s what sons were, heirs of the father’s estate. The Spirit bears witness in the Word *to* our spirit; our spirit receives his witness and then in Spirit-worked faith says, “Amen.”

#### **Gospel of the Day**<sup>2</sup>

John 3:1-17

Faith in the divine mystery of the Holy Trinity is a miracle beyond all other miraculous signs and wonders. It is a miracle of new birth, altogether the doing of the Spirit when and where it pleases him. Its miraculous nature is evident in the mystery of the Trinity itself and in the core message of the Spirit: We worship God who was sent by his Father to die and give eternal life only to those who trust in him alone for their salvation. The author of our salvation and the author of our trust is one and the same: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

#### **Psalm of the Day**<sup>4</sup>

Psalm 150 B

“Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!” The Church sings Psalm 150 in services that encourage God’s people to proclaim his message. The Psalter ends with an exuberant doxology. Martin Luther said, “Psalm 150 is a psalm of thanks first composed for the people of Israel to use for the praise of God. They used their stringed instruments and their voices to worship him in the sanctuary in Jerusalem. Today we worship him around the world with our stringed instruments, that is, with preaching and the gospel.”

## Gospel Acclamation

Isaiah 6:3

“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.” This was the call of the seraphs at Isaiah’s commissioning. They were standing above the throne of the Lord in the throne room of heaven and praising God. Their threefold repetition of “holy” expresses that our God is supremely holy, and calls to mind the three Persons of the Holy Trinity.

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty God and Father, dwelling in majesty and mystery, filling and renewing all creation by your eternal Spirit, and manifesting your saving grace through our Lord Jesus Christ, in mercy cleanse our hearts and lips that, free from doubt and fear, we may ever worship you, one true, immortal God, with your Son and the Holy Spirit, living and reigning, now and forever. Amen.

## Hymn of the Day

586 “Come, Holy Ghost, Creator Blest” (Rhabanus Maurus, 776-856)

This is one of the oldest of the ancient Latin hymns. It was written in the ninth century, but scholars are not sure of its author. The most likely one is Rhabanus Maurus, a monk, scholar, abbot and archbishop of Mainz in Germany. As the first stanza links the Holy Spirit to creation and filling the hearts of believers, stanza two calls on the Spirit as “Counselor” (cf. Romans 8:26).

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

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

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.

## Minor Festivals

Visitation (May 31)

After the Angel Gabriel announced to the Virgin Mary that she would give birth to the Son of God, Mary traveled to the hill country of Judea to visit her relative Elizabeth, the wife of the priest Zechariah. When Mary greeted Elizabeth, the baby in Elizabeth’s womb – John the Baptist – leaped for joy. In her own joy, Elizabeth blessed Mary and Jesus, the child in her womb (Luke 1:39-45). In her joy, Mary burst forth in the song we know as, “The Magnificat,” or “Song of Mary” (Luke 1:46-56).

## Traditions & Customs

Athanasian Creed

This creed is named after St. Athanasius, a staunch defender of the Christian faith in the fourth century. It was prepared to assist the Church in combating two errors that undermined Bible teaching. One error denied that God’s Son and the Holy Spirit are of one being or Godhead with the Father. The other error denied that Jesus Christ is true God and true man in one person. The Athanasian Creed continues to serve the Christian Church as a standard of the truth. It declares that whoever rejects the doctrine of the Trinity and the doctrine of Christ is without the saving faith.

## 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).

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

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

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

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