



ABOUT THE PROPERS

An Explanation of the Variable Parts of the Divine Service



Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

July 12, 2020



The Christian loves God above all things

The beautiful Prayer of the Day sets the tone for the Sunday. The Church prays for the love of God that we might always love him above all things. The Verse of the Day describes this total commitment to Christ as denying ourselves and carrying our crosses. The lessons warn of the earthly ramifications of such love, but also point to the promised heavenly rewards. 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 28:5-9

The false prophet Hananiah proclaimed a message that pleased everyone: within two years the captives and sacred articles would return from Babylon. Even Jeremiah liked the sound of Hananiah’s words. He was quick to add his “Amen” to the concept. However, Jeremiah knew that Hananiah was dead wrong. False preachers have long promised health and wealth to God’s followers. Christianity, however, is not built on a prosperity Gospel, but on the cross for both Christ and Christians. How difficult it must have been for Jeremiah to contradict this false prophet who was saying everything the people wanted to hear! Yet God has called the Christian to love him above all things. Loving God above all means loving God’s Word, even when it’s not what people want to hear. Jeremiah spoke the truth, and God had his back. Jeremiah prophesied that God would stop Hananiah from speaking lies in his name, and within two months the man was dead. Loving God above all brings conflict, but God promises to be with us through it all.

Second Lesson ¹

Romans 6:1b-11

This is the fifth in a series of sixteen lessons that run through Pentecost 17. In this Sunday’s context, this lesson provides an excellent opportunity to preach on the Fourth Part of Baptism from the Small Catechism: The meaning of baptism for our daily life. The Christian is able to love God above all things because he was buried with Christ through baptism into death. The resurrection to faith created a new man freed from sin and free to live wholly and completely for Christ. Our baptism enables us to love God above all, and it empowers us to do so daily.

Gospel of the Day ¹

Matthew 10:34-42

Persecution reprioritizes life and sharpens faith. However, the further Christians get from the lions’ roar or the martyr’s stake, the easier it is for us to make our faith in Christ merely moderately important in our lives. Family, friends, work, health—these all vie for our time and attention, and our faith gets pushed further and further down the list. When life is not so bad, who needs the promises of a better life to come? How true Luther’s words of warning: *no persecution is total persecution!* How false our thoughts that faith can be only moderately important! C.S. Lewis said, “Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance. The only thing it cannot be is moderately important.” In the Gospel, Christ asserts the all-important nature of faith, and the all-consuming nature of discipleship. Jesus calls us to love him above all—more than family or friends, more than personal safety or even life itself. Such total

commitment to Christ will not bring peace to your life, but constant conflict with the sinful world around you. Since he did not come to bring peace, but a sword, he points the Christian to rewards in heaven, kept safe by the One who sent him.

Psalm of the Day Psalm 89

Our God is a faithful, loving God. Although the political nation ruled by David came to an end, God faithfully kept his covenant with David in the establishment of a true spiritual kingdom ruled by David's great descendant Jesus.

Verse of the Day Mark 8:34b

“If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.” Jesus means that we must deny our natural, sinful self, that evil nature within us which is dead in sins, which follows Satan, and which is under the wrath of God. Moreover, a follower of Christ must “take up his cross.” To take up one's cross means willing to suffer for Christ's sake as his disciple. This is the way of one who has come to faith in Christ and wishes to be his follower.

Prayer of the Day

O God, you have prepared joys beyond understanding for those who love you. Pour into our hearts such love for you that, loving you above all things, we may obtain your promises, which exceed all that we can desire; 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 453 “Come, Follow Me, the Savior Spoke” (Johann Scheffler, 1624-77)

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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