



ABOUT THE PROPERS

An Explanation of the Variable Parts of the Divine Service



Seventh Sunday of Easter

May 21, 2023



Live in eager expectation of heavenly glory!

The glory Christ promises us in heaven is not dimmed by earthly suffering; rather, such suffering reminds us of the glory that awaits us. First the cross; then the crown. Our light and momentary troubles cannot mute the joy of living in eager expectation of glory. The week that falls between Ascension and Pentecost is one of waiting and expectation for the promised Spirit and the promised glory. The Prayer and Verse of the Day mark the impending nature of our departure and Christ's return.

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

Acts 1:12-26

Matthias is chosen to join the apostles, who served as eyewitnesses of Christ's resurrection. Through their testimony, God gave his Church the expectation of future glory.

Second Reading¹

1 Peter 4:12-17; 5:6-11

Peter wrote at a time when Nero and the empire had turned against the Way. As followers of an illicit religion, great suffering impended for the faithful Christians. The lion's roar could be heard coming ever closer to the people of God. In this life, sufferings will come; but we live in eager expectation of glory. The God of all grace called us to future glory, and no suffering, no emperor or empire can make us lose sight of what awaits us. The cares we have, we cast on him, knowing that any suffering can be borne in joy with eyes fixed on the glory that's coming.

Gospel¹

John 17:1-11a

Can you hear the certainty in Christ's voice? Can you feel the authority resonate from his words? Stop for a moment and marvel at the words Christ speaks even as his enemies prepare to arrest him, to torture him, to kill him. Christ enters his passion as victor. We know the end of the story; we know this is Christ's path to glory. But what would the disciples think in the next few hours as the blows landed, the whip bit, the nails pierced, and the blood flowed? This is glory? Just wait...these sufferings would not last. Just wait...glory is coming. Look at Jesus' promise: he has been granted all authority—but he uses it to give, not to take. He gives us life eternal won by the glory of his completed work. On this post-ascension Sunday, Christ's promise to return to his Father has proven true. What comfort, then, is his promised prayer for us who remain behind! We are in the world, but not as orphans, and so we bear our sufferings in eager expectation of the glory that's coming.

Psalm of the Day Psalm 124 A

“Our Help Is in the Name of the LORD.”

Gospel Acclamation John 14:18

On Maundy Thursday, Jesus told his disciples, “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.” The disciples would need this assurance because over the course of the next several hours as they would witness their Lord betrayed, arrested, put on trial, suffer, and die. Jesus’ promise is that after his ascension, he would send his Holy Spirit to the apostles at Pentecost. The promise also reminds us that Jesus would return to them after his resurrection, and will come back to all believers on the Last Day.

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, your Son our Savior was taken up in glory and intercedes for us at your right hand. Through your living and abiding Word, give us hearts to know him and faith to follow where he has gone; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Hymn of the Day 446 “Jesus Christ, My Sure Defense” (Otto von Schwerin, 1616-1679)

Church Year Season¹ 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.

Traditions & Customs 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.

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.

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.

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

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

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