



ABOUT THE PROPER

An Explanation of the Variable Parts of the Divine Service



Second Sunday of Easter

April 27, 2025



“Because He Lives”

We Have a Meaningful Mission

If Jesus remained dead, all he would provide is an example of a beautiful life. If Jesus remained dead, the mission of his followers would simply be to share advice. *“Here is how Jesus would want us to love one another. Or, “Jesus would want us to think about money like this.” Or, “This is how Jesus would pray.”* But because he lives, his followers now have a meaningful mission. It is not to share advice, but to testify to what we have seen and know to be true. Christ has risen! Thus, Jesus is not a standard, but our Savior. Jesus is not primarily an example for this life, but the doorway into eternal life. His resurrection to glory will be the resurrection of all who put their faith in him. Sharing that good news—*that’s* our mission.

First Reading³ Acts 5:12, 17-32

This lesson begins a series from the Book of Acts that shows the apostles with markedly different character than the disciples in the upper room. These are not the same timid disciples who often questioned their rabbi out of lack of understanding or covered behind locked doors out of fear. Now, even in the face of persecution, the apostles boldly proclaimed the Good News of new life. Such is the power and joy of the risen Christ in the lives of his followers.

Second Reading³ Revelation 1:4-18

The revelation of Jesus to St. John is for us a vision of promise and assurance. The brilliant vision of the all-glorious Living One brought John to his knees in abject fear. Yet the gentle hand of the First and Last and the inspiring voice of rushing waters calms fears and emboldens hearts. Once dead, now alive forever, the Son of Man triumphantly holds the keys to death and hell.

Gospel³ John 20:19-31

With repeated assurances of peace the gathered disciples are overjoyed to behold the risen Christ with their own eyes. Armed with the Ministry of the Keys, Jesus commissions them to proclaim their joy and open the kingdom of heaven to lost sinners. The visible and physical proofs demanded by Thomas anticipate future doubters of the Son of Man’s divinity. In his grace we behold our risen Lord through Word and Sacrament. How blessed by the Spirit are we: though we have not visibly seen, yet we see our Lord and God through eyes of faith.

Psalm of the Day⁴ 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 John 20:29

“Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” Ever since Christ’s ascension, this is how the Holy Spirit brings souls to faith – through the preaching and hearing of his Word. Faith comes from hearing the message, and whoever believes are blessed with the gift of everlasting life in heaven.

Prayer of the Day

O risen Lord, you came to your disciples and took away their fears with your word of peace. Come to us also by Word and sacrament, and banish our fears with the comforting assurance of your abiding presence; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Hymn of the Day

 456 “O Sons and Daughters of the King” (Jean Tisserand, d. 1494)

This hymn is a narrative Easter carol; it begins with the Easter gospel from Matthew 28:1-10 (vv 1-3) and concludes with the doubting Thomas story from John 20:19-29 (vv 4-8). Because the narrative covers two Easter season Sundays, the verses can be divided as follows: for Easter Sunday morning, verses 1-3, 5, and 8; for Easter evening, verses 1-4 and 8; for the second Sunday of Easter (which usually includes the doubting Thomas story), verses 1 and 4-8.

Church Year Season ¹

 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.

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.

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.

Minor Festivals

 St. Mark, Evangelist (April 25)

St. Mark, the Evangelist, was a close associate with several of the apostles. He is believed to be identified as John-Mark of Acts and the cousin of Barnabas. Despite their earlier differences, he reconciled with Paul, who considered him “very useful...for ministry” (2 Timothy 4:11). Later, he worked in Rome (1 Peter 5:13), where tradition has it that he wrote his Gospel from St. Peter’s sermons before founding the church in Alexandria and facing a martyr’s death. He is remembered as the lion-hearted evangelist, depicted with his fellow evangelists as the four living creatures of Ezekiel 1 and Revelation 4.

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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