



ABOUT THE PROPERS

An Explanation of the Variable Parts of the Divine Service



Third Sunday of Easter

April 26, 2020



Hope Restored

The certain hope of eternal life with God is founded on the sacrificial death and victorious resurrection of Christ. God had promised this ancient hope in the Garden at the dawn of time. God had carried this ancient hope in his Word through the ages. How did the disciples fail to anticipate the resurrection? How did the teachers and people of Israel fail to see the Messiah God had promised and delivered? They let their wants and cultural expectations color their view of Scripture, and hope was lost. But God restored this ancient hope by raising Jesus from the dead and pointing his people back to his promises.

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 Lesson¹

Acts 2:14a; 36-47

This lesson continues Peter’s Pentecost sermon from last Sunday with the culmination of his message to the people of Israel. They had lost the ancient hope long promised, and instead they placed their hope in the punctilious performance of human ordinances. Peter’s sermon dashes their false hope to pieces. Could there be a better preaching of specific Law than Peter’s words here? Could there be a better preaching of specific Gospel as Peter restores their hope through the sweet message of Christ crucified and risen for sinners? Rightly dividing Law and Gospel leads to hope restored in the Savior.

Second Lesson¹

1 Peter 1:17-21

This is the second in a series of five continual readings from 1 Peter. Peter’s first epistle is a letter of hope in the midst of suffering. He wrote to believers elected by God but persecuted for their faith. Trials and grief try to choke out our hope. But how empty life would be if we followed the way of the world! We would have nothing but a short life in this world of pain with no hope for a better future. Our hope is restored when we remember that we were bought by the blood of Christ, and that one day we will join our glorious Savior in our heavenly home. Until that day, we live in this world as strangers who are focused on going home.

Gospel of the Day¹

Luke 24:13-35

For these two disciples on the road, it was a day of great puzzlement, sadness, and disillusionment. They left the Holy City having heard the report of the women and Peter and John. But their understanding of God’s plan of salvation was deficient: they weren’t expecting a resurrection! John puts his finger on the disciples’ problem. “They still did not understand *from Scripture* that Jesus had to rise from the dead.” (John 20:9). Their sight, logic, emotions, and expectations had led them to abandon what Scripture said. But our gracious Lord comes and identifies the problem: they are not believing *all* that the prophets have spoken. They chose only to believe those parts of Scripture that met their preconceived notions of what the Messiah should be. Our Lord addresses the problem by explaining *all* the Scriptures that showed the Christ had to die and rise. How well did they learn the lesson? They marveled at how he opened the Scriptures to them and restored that ancient hope!

Psalm of the Day

Psalm 67

Salvation, which comes through our Savior’s resurrection, is meant for all people and will fill all believers with joy.

Verse of the Day

Luke 24:32

Alleluia. Alleluia. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia. "Our hearts were burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us." Alleluia. On Easter Sunday, Jesus joined two disciples on their walk from Jerusalem to Emmaus. The disciples were confused and distraught; uncertain as to what just happened to their Lord. Jesus then patiently explained to them from the Scriptures that the Christ had to die and rise again to complete his saving work. Having arrived at one of their homes, Jesus broke bread and revealed his identity. The Verse of the Day records the disciples' amazed and joyful response.

Prayer of the Day

O God, by the humiliation of your Son you lifted up this fallen world from the despair of death. By his resurrection to life, grant your faithful people gladness of heart and the hope of eternal joys; 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

160 "This Joyful Eastertide" (George R. Woodward, 1848-1934)

The text expresses the joy Christ's resurrection brings to believers (v1); that joy provides a sense of security throughout our lives (v2) and gives confidence even in the face of death (v 3). The refrain echoes the truths expressed by St. Paul to the Corinthians (15:14,20): "And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith...But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead..."

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

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.

Traditions

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. Philip and St. James, Apostles (May 1)

Philip was from Bethsaida in Galilee. Through him some Greeks were led to Jesus (John 12:21). James is traditionally known as "James the Less" (Mark 15:40), nicknamed as such to distinguish him from the other "James" in the Bible.

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 and Editor.
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