



ABOUT THE PROPERS

An Explanation of the Variable Parts of the Divine Service



Sixth Sunday of Easter

May 17, 2020



The love of God who lives in us leads to a life of obedience

The Sixth Sunday of Easter has traditionally been called “Rogate” Sunday. “Rogate” is a Latin word translated as the command, “ask,” or “pray.” The Sunday derives its name from Jesus’ assurance to his disciples about prayer; that he will give them what they ask. Jesus’ promise of another Counselor is a loaded one: the Holy Spirit gives us the ability to do what Jesus asks. This Sunday’s lessons teach that love for our risen Lord means obedience to his commands. Only Jesus’ promises make that possible. The Prayer of the Day sets the tone: “Put your Spirit in us to think those things that are true and long for those things that are good...”

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 17:22-31

Paul preached to a people enamored with spirituality, but ignorant of the true God. To a people who thought they had all the answers, Paul offers real knowledge of the true God unknown to them. Imagine the scene on Mars Hill. Rising above them, the higher hill of the Acropolis loomed and upon its peak the Parthenon dominated the skyline. This timeless treasure of architecture marked the high point of Greek art and culture, and served as a temple for the city’s patron goddess, Athena. In front of this jaw-dropping beauty, Paul says, “God does not live in temples built by hands.” No, this unknown God made himself known by living with us, and then living in us. Love for this risen Lord leads to a life filled with loving obedience.

Second Lesson¹

1 Peter 3:15-22

This is the fifth reading from 1 Peter during the Easter season. Last week Peter declared what we are in Christ: a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a people belonging to God. In this lesson he details what that means for our lives: Set apart Christ as Lord. Love for our Lord means obedience to his commands—even if that obedience means suffering. The Christian can offer willing obedience in the face of suffering because Christ rules, and Holy Baptism guarantees our connection to him.

Gospel of the Day¹

John 14:15-21

Because I live, you, too, will live! Jesus promises more than just a resurrection from the dead for his disciples. Jesus is life, that state of blessed holiness and perfect righteousness and communion with God. Man had lost that life in Adam’s fall, and sin and death rushed into the vacuum left behind. The Son of God, the Life, came to bring it back. Because he is alive, we, too, will live in blessedness and holiness forever. We are children who will never be orphaned, but rather will be comforted, counseled, and kept forever. What is our response? Life lived as God intended—a life that treasures our Lord, his Word, and obedience to both!

Psalm of the Day

Psalm 66

In her song to her Lord, the Church calls on the world to give fitting praise to God for his blessings.

Verse of the Day

John 14:23

On Maundy Thursday, Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him." Love and obedience are linked together. In love for sinners and obedience to his Father's will, Jesus sacrificed himself for us. His love compels us to show love toward him and others. Through our obedience, we reflect Christ's sacrificial love for us and witness to his saving death and resurrection.

Prayer of the Day

Father of lights, every good and perfect gift comes from you. Inspire us to think those things that are true and long for those things that are good, that we may always make our petitions according to your gracious will; 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

377 "Dear Christians, One and All Rejoice" (Martin Luther, 1483-1546)

"Because of its clear doctrinal statements, this hymn became popular with the German people and was apparently an effective evangelism tool. In his preface to Johannes Magdeburg's *Psalter* of 1565, Tileman Hesshusius wrote: 'I do not doubt that through this one hymn of Luther many hundreds of Christians have been brought to the true faith, who before could not endure the name of Luther; but the noble, precious words of the hymn have won their hearts, so that they are constrained to embrace the truth: so that in my opinion the hymns have helped the spread of the Gospel not a little.'"

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.

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.

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.
Clipart courtesy of "Ecclesiastical Art by Ed Riojas"