



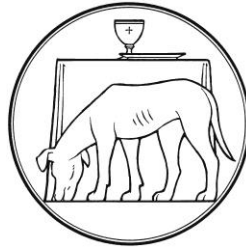
ABOUT THE PROPERS

An Explanation of the Variable Parts of the Divine Service



Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

August 30, 2020



The Christian is meant for all people.

The Prayer of the Day reminds us that it is only by God's gift of grace that we come into his presence to offer true and faithful service. Today's lessons teach that the gift of grace given *to* Israel, God also intended to give *through* Israel to the world. The Church is meant for all people: a display of God's mercy and a result of the living and active Word of God.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 Lesson¹

Isaiah 56:1,6-8

The words of this lesson came to the mind and mouth of our Savior when he confronted the gross perversion of temple worship in Mark 11. Through Isaiah God told the world that God-fearing Gentiles would always have a place within his temple. Yet in his temple on earth, the religious leadership turned the court of Gentiles into a marketplace that robbed both man and God. Jesus cleansed it of both the commerce and corruption and quoted this lesson. The godly Gentiles described are the exact opposite of the Jews in Matthew 15. God in his grace calls the Gentiles into his presence and makes his Church a house of prayer for all nations.

Second Lesson¹

Romans 11:13-15,28-32

St. Paul warns his Gentile readers against any pride on their part or prejudice against the Jews. Note the point of this Apostle to the Gentiles: he reaches out to the Gentile with the hopes of also winning the Jew. Verse 15 makes the point of our Gospel lesson. Rejection by the people of Israel meant Christ would be preached to the Gentiles. How personal this statement is for Paul! How many synagogues had he preached in, only to be cast out and make his way to the Gentiles? But yet Israel retains its dual status: enemies that are beloved. When the nation of Israel turned from its Savior God and his Messiah, God set his face against them as enemies of the Gospel. But yet God's call and his Word of promise remain. Such is grace, that God does not love the lovable, but makes the unlovable his dear possession. Just look at what he did with the disobedient Gentiles! Both Jew and Gentile apart from Christ languish in the fearful prison called "Disobedience." God shut them up together that locked thus, all hope and all self-help were gone. Disobedience was all they had and all they could bring forth. Only one door permits one to leave this prison, and it is inscribed: "God's Mercy."

Gospel of the Day¹

Matthew 15:21-28

Note the context of chapter 15. The children of Israel—and especially their religious leaders—found nothing but fault in Jesus of Nazareth. The chosen people of God to whom belonged the patriarchs, the promises, the covenant and the temple, could see nothing in Christ but a breaker of man-made traditions. Jesus' words to them could not be harsher. They were the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophesy: their outward rites and rituals belied an inward spiritual emptiness. The very people who should have been closest to Christ were most distant. So Jesus distances himself from them and goes to the Gentile land of ancient paganism, Tyre and Sidon. There he finds a most inexplicable thing. After leaving the land of God's chosen people, Jesus finds a woman—a Canaanite woman—who received the Word of God and trusted in God's promises in a way that shamed every one of the religious teachers. The male leaders of God's people failed to recognize him, but behold! Look carefully! A woman, a Canaanite woman, cries out, "*Kyrie eleison!*" "*Lord, have mercy.*" And to whom

does she cry? She called him “Lord, Son of David,” with all of its messianic implications. How amazing is the grace of God that chooses the weak and lowly things of the world to shame the wise and proud. Only twice are we told that Jesus called someone’s faith great. Both were Gentiles, and both exhibited a God-given trust in the Word and promises of God made man.

Psalm of the Day Psalm 133-134

Today we have two brief psalms-the first commends the unity that believers have, and the second calls the temple's night watchmen to prayer and praise. The joy over our salvation unites us in praise to the Lord.

Verse of the Day Hebrews 4:12 (cf. RSV)

“The Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.” The writer encourages the Hebrews to remain to the Lord God and his promise of eternal rest in heaven. God keeps his people connected to him and his faithfulness through his living and active Word.

Prayer of the Day

Almighty and merciful God, it is only by your gift of grace that we come into your presence and offer true and faithful service. Grant that our worship on earth may always be pleasing to you and in the life to come give us the fulfillment of what you have promised; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Hymn of the Day 413 “When in the Hour of Utmost Need” (Paul Eber, 1511-69)

Church Year Season ¹ 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.
Clipart courtesy of “Ecclesiastical Art by Ed Riojas”