



ABOUT THE PROPERs

An Explanation of the Variable Parts of the Divine Service



Fifth Sunday in Lent

April 6, 2025



“Open Door Policies”

Hiding Treasure in the Trash

This week we see how our Father makes the treasures of his house available to any and all. He places them in the last place we'd expect—the trash. In God's family, the things the world prizes and pursues are counted as worthless. Conversely, what the world rejects and discards is considered priceless and worth pursuing. The best example of this is Jesus Christ himself. The Father sent his greatest treasure—God the Son - to earth. And many considered Jesus to be a trash that needed to be taken out. . . a troublemaker that needed to be killed. In truth, Christ is the precious cornerstone that God used to build his house, the one with the open door.

First Reading³ Isaiah 43:16-21

The LORD had delivered his people from a life of slavery in Egypt and from impending death at the hand of the pursuing Egyptian army. But even this glorious rescue pales in comparison to the salvation to be worked in the Messiah. This is the Lord's invitation to praise him for the eternal salvation he will bring.

Second Reading³ Philippians 3:4b-14

To Paul all that is earthly gain and glory is rubbish compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus. There is no room for the self-righteous in Christ's kingdom. We want to be found with an alien righteousness. Then we will know Christ's power, and because we have been called, gathered, and enlightened we put the past behind and strive for the eternal prize.

Gospel³ Luke 20:9-19

We find ourselves horrified by the actions of the evil tenants. In self-righteous anger we say with the Jews, “May this never be!” Jesus warns that the self-righteous Pharisees of the ages will be dashed to pieces against him, the Cornerstone. Even so, the owner of the vineyard again and again sends Word to the renters. His desire to reconnect with the wicked tenants is so great that he sends his own Son. Those who receive him with hearts of faith will gratefully bring forth fruit and, along with him, enjoy the Son's inheritance forever.

Psalm of the Day⁴ Psalm 73 A “God Is the Strength of My Heart”

The Church sings Psalm 73 in services that encourage us to persevere in faith through the challenges of life. It is the first psalm in Book III of the Psalter and begins a series of 11 psalms of Asaph. Martin Luther said, “Psalm 73 is a teaching psalm against the great irritation when godless and prosperous rich people ridicule poor and beleaguered believers as if God pays no attention to them. But God says, ‘Stop! Go into the sanctuary, and hear what the Word of God says about the situation. Such evil people will suddenly come to nothing, for there is no foundation under them.’”

Gospel Acclamation Psalm 118:22

“The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.” Christ is the cornerstone, put in place by the LORD, the builder of the Church. We rejoice because God has made Jesus - previously rejected by the builders (unbelieving Israel) - as the cornerstone of the Church (spiritual Israel) and the foundation of her faith through his death and resurrection.

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, by your great goodness, mercifully look upon your people that we may be governed and preserved evermore in body and soul; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Hymn of the Day 396 “Christ, the Life of All the Living” (Ernst C. Homburg, 1605-1681)

Church Year Season ² Lent

The season of Lent leads the Church on a forty-day journey of repentance and prayer, of remembrance and renewal of our baptism. God calls to mankind: Return to the Lord! The journey begins with Ash Wednesday’s warning of mortality and culminates at the Service of Holy Baptism in the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday.

The Church’s Lenten worship is muted and quiet. For centuries, the Church has omitted her most jubilant songs of praise during this season of repentance (e.g. the “Gloria in Excelsis,” and the use of the word “Alleluia”) to reflect the somber nature of the season. Note, however, that the Sundays are designated as Sunday in Lent, not Sundays of Lent. The Sundays themselves are not considered part of the forty days, but are islands of refreshment in our Lenten walk.

Colors & Symbolism Lent: Purple or Violet

These colors are a sign of royalty, self-discipline, sorrow and repentance. Purple also reminds us of sacrifice, not only because that colored clothing was very expensive (sacrifice of money), but also because in order to make purple clothing in ancient times, one had to dye the cloth in the blood of snails (sacrifice of life). Thus purple is a fitting color for the penitential season of Lent, during which we focus more intentionally on our sinfulness, and how our King and Savior, Jesus Christ suffered in our place and sacrificed himself on the cross to take away our sins.

Nain Paraments Lent

Superfrontal: The lamb at the center of the parament represents Jesus, the Lamb of God who was sacrificed to take away the sin of the world (John 1:29; 3:16-17). The nimbus (halo) around its head reminds us that Jesus was a perfect sacrifice, even greater than the unblemished lambs required of the Passover meal (Exodus 12:5).

The palm branches remind us of Jesus’ triumphant entry into Jerusalem on the Sunday before he died (John 12:13). Palm branches were used in celebration of victory. Jesus entered Jerusalem to conquer sin, death, and the devil. Our crucified and risen Lord assures us in his Word that his victory is ours by faith (1 Corinthians 15:57).

[The significance of the crosses on the far left and right of the superfrontal are explained below]

Lectern & Pulpit antependia: The cross formed by four nails represents Jesus’ death by which he was nailed to the cross (Luke 23:33; John 20:25,27). The white sash around the arms of the cross symbolizes Jesus’ righteousness and his perfect victory over our enemies through his resurrection (Romans 4:25; 1 Corinthians 15:20-23;54-57).

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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