



ABOUT THE PROPER

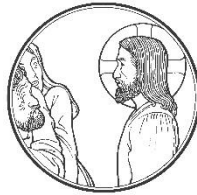
An Explanation of the Variable Parts of the Divine Service



Tenth Sunday after Pentecost

Proper 15

August 17, 2025



“Wounds That Heal”

God’s Word Divides

We often divide humanity into groups: this ethnic group versus that one, men versus women, wealthy versus poor. Yet, every ethnic group is under God’s law. That law equally convicts men and women of sin. Because of sin, both the wealthy and poor will die.

Only through faith in Christ is sin forgiven and the sting of death removed. God’s Word creates that saving faith, but not in everyone who hears it. Fallen mankind retains the awful power to reject the Word and God’s gift of faith. Therefore, God’s Word produces the only people distinction that matters—believers and unbelievers.

We desire to live in peace with other people. But Jesus teaches, this side of heaven, that desire is a pipe dream. Those who embrace the gospel in faith will inevitably face hostility. Following Jesus will come at a price. Yet he promises that our perseverance will be rewarded.

First Reading³ Jeremiah 23:23-29

With the Kingdom of Judah moving ever closer to judgment, Jeremiah proclaims the Lord’s condemnation of false prophets. These false prophets had led the people into idolatry, claiming to speak in the name of the Lord. But there is comfort for the faithful: the true Word of the Lord comes like a hammer to crush and like a fire to refine. It is only through such sin-crushing and soul-refining work that we find eternal righteousness in the Word of truth.

Second Reading³ Hebrews 12:1-13

Running the race of life requires perseverance because the Word of God brings division and persecution and violence. There will be hardships that cause the heart to grow weary. But God promises that these trials— even to the point of shedding of blood—are meant for our good. They are God’s way of disciplining us as his sons. The result will be a harvest of righteousness in our lives and peace in our hearts. The Christian faces the hardships of life head on by fixing his eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith. Our struggle is against sin and for Christ—so strengthen your feeble arms and your weak knees, focus on the examples of the saints who have gone before us, and run the race.

Gospel³ Luke 12:49-53

The fire of the Word has come to destroy evil and bring peace between God and his people. Jesus warns that his fire will bring division between believer and unbeliever, even within that most intimate of human relationships, the family. How can Jesus wish such division were already happening? He can only say that because he knows its final purpose: the salvation and purifying of believers.

Psalm of the Day⁴ Psalm 4

The Church sings Psalm 4 as a cry for relief, peace, and joy in the midst of turmoil and distress. The Lord is faithful to his promises and hears when we call on him. Martin Luther said, “The fourth psalm both comforts and teaches us. God brings comfort after trying our faith and patience. The psalm teaches us to trust God even if things go poorly. It also rebukes the godless, who busy themselves with fleshly comfort. If anyone talks to them about faith and patience, they despise instruction. But believers find their help in the Lord.”

Gospel Acclamation

1 Corinthians 15:58

“Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.”

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 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

590 “O Holy Spirit, Enter In” (Michael Schirmer, 1606-1673)

Church Year Season ¹

Season 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 cover a great body of doctrine for faith and life.

Minor Festivals

St. Mary, Mother of Our Lord (August 15)

Colors & Symbolism

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.

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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