



# ABOUT THE PROPER

*An Explanation of the Variable Parts of the Divine Service*



## Second Sunday in Lent

March 1, 2026



Exactly What I Need: Faith

The Second Sunday in Lent is traditionally known as “Reminiscere” Sunday. The Sunday derives its name from the Latin words of the Introit of the day: “Remember (*reminiscere*), O LORD, your compassion and your mercy, for they are from eternity” (Psalm 25:6).

When Jesus said, “No one can enter the kingdom of God,” he declared that the need for salvation is universal. There is no one on the face of the earth who can make the case that they deserve God’s blessing. Yet, ages ago, God declared that all nations would be blessed. God has declared his love for the world and promised he would save the world. Some interpret this to mean that all people will be saved in the end. This is not true. The gift of salvation is meant for the world; however, it is received by faith. “Whoever believes in him...” the Gospel says. The good news is that faith is also God’s gift, imparted through the gospel.

First Lesson <sup>1</sup>                      Genesis 12:1-8

God’s plan of salvation called for one special nation which would carry the Promise of the Seed meant for all people. From the beginning, this nation would be built on faith in the promises of God. God told Abram to leave all he knew and go to a place yet unknown and wait for blessings as yet undefined. Abram believed and set God’s plan in motion to build a nation on the promises of God to fulfill the promises of God. All people would be blessed by the nation descended from Abram, because this man of faith would bear the bloodline of the Promised Seed, the Messiah who would come as Savior of all nations.

Second Reading <sup>1</sup>                      Romans 4:1-5, 13-17

Paul taught the Romans about faith by using Abraham as an example. Faith is simply receiving the grace of God by trusting in his promises. This God credits to us as righteousness. Abraham’s righteousness did not come by doing but by believing. What did Abraham do? Nothing! God did it all: He made the promises; he gave the inheritance; he gave the child, the blessing for all nations. Abraham merely received the promises of God by believing that the One who made the promises was faithful. And then what happened? God acted again and credited this faith to Abraham as righteousness. This is the righteousness that every person needs to stand in God’s presence. This is the righteousness God gives. We are people like Abraham, who believe that God justifies the wicked. And so God forgives our wickedness and calls us righteous—no, even more—he gives us righteousness in the place of our wickedness. This is the living water that slakes the thirst of every believing soul.

Gospel <sup>1</sup>                                      John 3:1-17

How hideous that snake on the pole! It was a reminder of the pain inflicted by the snake’s bite and even more a reminder of the cause of the snake’s bite—sin. Now we, too, look in Lent at something initially hideous. Christ on the cross is horrible to look at since his suffering is what we deserve to suffer and a reminder of the greatness of our sin and guilt. But only at the cross do we even begin to grasp the depth also of God’s love. He himself turns our eyes to that tree and gives us the balm of healing that lasts into eternity. In the Bible light is often a metaphor for truth and joy. Therefore *Laetare!* For this is the truth that brings pure joy. There is no other balm for sinners. Jesus is not just one religious leader among many. He is the only Savior and the only possible Savior. Those who seek another will feel the full fury of God for rejecting so great a salvation, so loving a Savior.

Psalm of the Day <sup>4</sup>                      Psalm 121 A                      “I Lift Up My Eyes to the Mountains”

The Church sings Psalm 121 in services that celebrate the value of faith in God regardless of circumstances. The psalmist confidently asserts that the Lord protects us from both physical and spiritual harm. Martin Luther said, “Psalm 121 is a comfort psalm. We see how

the Lord treats both the psalmist and us as we remain strong in faith, waiting for his help and protection. Even when it appears that God is sleeping, it is not so. He watches and keeps us secure even to the end.”

Gospel Acclamation                      John 3:16

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” Jesus said in John 3:14 that “the Son of Man *must* be lifted up.” Why? Because of God’s love for a world of sinners. Jesus’ words formulate the simplest yet most profound expression of the good news his Father sent him to bring to a perishing world: “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, you see that we have no power to defend ourselves. Guard and keep us both outwardly and inwardly from all adversities that may happen to the body and all evil thoughts that may assault and hurt the 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                      570 “God Loved the World So that He Gave”      (Heiliges Lippen....Gesangbuch, Stettin, c. 1778)

The first two verses of the hymn are based closely on John 3:16-17 and Ephesians 2:20, respectively. This hymn reminds believers that God in his desire to have us live, sent his Son to forgive us, and his Spirit to bring us to faith through the means of grace (vv 3,4).

Church Year Season <sup>2</sup>                      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).

<sup>1</sup> Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year A”. Jonathan E. Schroeder, Author.  
<sup>2</sup> Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year B”. Daniel M. Deutschlander, Author.  
<sup>3</sup> Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year C”. Joel J. Gawrisch, Author.  
<sup>4</sup> From *Christian Worship: Psalter* © 2021 Northwestern Publishing House. Reprinted by permission.  
Clipart courtesy of “Ecclesiastical Art by Ed Riojas”