



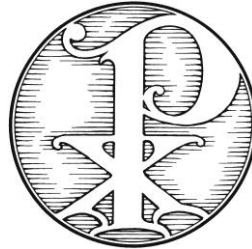
ABOUT THE PROPERs

An Explanation of the Variable Parts of the Divine Service



First Sunday after Christmas

December 27, 2020



The time has come for redemption through Jesus

“When the time of their purification according to the Law of Moses had been completed, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord” (Luke 2:22). There Jesus was received and taken up into the arms of Simeon, who was righteous and devout, “waiting for the consolation of Israel.” Simeon praised God and blessed the parents by confessing the cross for which this child was appointed. “At that very moment,” faithful Anna, who had watched, prayed and worshiped in the temple for so long, also came up and “gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.”

The Propers

*The Proper*s 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 Lesson ¹

Isaiah 45:20-25

Already those who do not know the real miracle of Christmas are putting away its tinsel and other trappings. They have passed by the peasant couple and their Child. But to us the real miracle has been revealed. To us God has made known his salvation in this little Child of Bethlehem. In him and in none other God will accomplish our salvation and the redemption of the world. When those around us say, as they do every year, “Well, I’m glad that’s over for another year!” we will reply, “Oh, no! For us it just keeps getting better; for he has revealed him as our salvation and our righteousness—yes, yours too!”

Second Lesson ¹

Colossians 3:12-17

The noise of the world’s Christmas is passing away. The joy of our Christmas is just beginning. For God without any prompting from us or merit in us has chosen us to be the bearers of his Son in the world. Since he has chosen us to know the first miracle of Christmas, let us delight in the second one as well, in his choice of us to bear his Son before the world. As the world puts away its shallow Christmas “niceness,” let us put on Christ; let us be and be seen as heirs of salvation, eager to imitate this Child who now dwells in and with us.

Gospel of the Day ¹

Luke 2:25-40

Not everyone realized who had come to the temple that day. Most just passed by a peasant couple carrying a baby. But God for reasons of his own revealed himself to Simeon and Anna. They saw that the Child who had come to the temple was in fact The Temple, God’s true and everlasting dwelling place with men. And so they sang, not of their own merit or even of their faith; they sang and rejoiced that God had sent salvation to his people and had made it known to them. God has sent us salvation and revealed himself to us in the Christmas gospel; in revealing himself he gives himself and all that he is and has for us and for our salvation. Oh rejoice and sing his praises! Had he revealed himself to everyone else, I could understand that; but he has revealed and given himself to me. That I will never understand; but I will receive him and sing his praises to all who will listen.

Psalm of the Day

Psalm 111

This psalm focuses us on the heart of Christmas, and it invites us to ponder with delight what our Lord has done for us. We continue to sing praises to God for the marvelous work of redemption which he provided through his Son, our new-born Savior.

Verse of the Day

Colossians 3:15a

“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.” The apostle St. Paul urges us to let the peace that comes through faith in Christ and by his redeeming work of redemption rule over all other attitudes. God has called us to share this with one another in the Church, as the body of Christ.

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, in mercy you sent your one and only Son to take upon himself our human nature. By his gracious coming deliver us from the corruption of our sin and transform us into the likeness of his glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Hymn of the Day

269 “In Peace and Joy I Now Depart” (Martin Luther, 1483-1546)

Church Year Season

Christmas

The Christmas season celebrates the Incarnation of the Son of God. The eternal Word became flesh that he might be the Christ, anointed to redeem God’s people. God had to become man to live under the law and die in our place. Christ’s birth, then, is inextricably connected to his death: Good Friday necessitated Christmas. So great is the love of God that even though our sin required such a sacrifice, the Light of the world still descended into our darkness.

Colors & Symbolism

Christmas: 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

In addition to lighting the Christ candle at the center of the Advent wreath, decorating the church and house (including the Christmas tree), setting up the Nativity scene, engaging in charitable acts, and giving and exchanging presents. many families follow the tradition of gathering around on Christmas Eve or Day and reading the nativity story from Luke 2. Although many consider Christmas Day as the end of the Christmas season, this is not the case. Traditionally, celebrations and festivities began on Christmas Day (or Christmas Eve night) and continued throughout the Christmas season. The Christmas carol, *The Twelve Days of Christmas* points to this. It was the practice to give/receive a gift on each of the twelve days; although some only celebrated during the ‘Christmas Octave,’ which was the eight days from Christmas Day through New Year’s Day.

Minor Festivals ¹

St. Stephen, Deacon and Martyr (December 26); St. John, Apostle and Evangelist (December 27); The Holy Innocents, Martyrs (December 28)

In the fourth and fifth century, the Western Church established a triduum of martyr festivals on December 26, 27, and 28 to commemorate St. Stephen, St. John, and the Holy Innocents. Medieval commentators suggest that these three festivals reveal the triple kind of martyrdom endured by the faithful: St. Stephen, martyrdom in will and deed; St. John, martyrdom in will but not in deed; the Holy Innocents, martyrdom in deed but not in will. Finally, on January 1, the Church celebrates the circumcision and naming of Jesus, Son of Mary and Son of God.

Nain Paraments

Christmas

Superfrontal: “Immanuel” is Hebrew for “God with us.” This name for Jesus Christ was revealed to God’s people through Isaiah in a prophecy of the Savior’s birth (7:14). The angel Gabriel announced to Joseph in a dream that the child in the Virgin Mary’s womb would be that promised Immanuel – God who had come to be with us (Matthew 1:23) in order to save us. Sometimes the name is spelled *Emmanuel*, which is the Latin alphabet transliteration of the Hebrew pronunciation of the same name.

The vines next to Immanuel represent the spiritual life that Jesus, the vine brings to God’s children, the branches (John 15:5).

Lectern antependium: *The Greek Cross*: distinguished by four arms of equal length.

Pulpit antependium: *The Celtic Cross*: similar to the Latin cross (†), but with a circle surrounding the center, which symbolizes the eternal nature of Christ and the gift of eternal life to all who believe in him.

¹ Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year B”. Daniel M. Deutschlander, Author.
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