



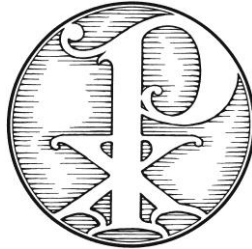
ABOUT THE PROPERs

An Explanation of the Variable Parts of the Divine Service



Second Sunday after Christmas

January 3, 2021



Jesus reveals and gives himself through the Gospel

There are really two miracles in Christmas: that God has become man in the lowliness of the manger, and that he has made it known to us. Why not to everyone else? Because so many are more interested in their own opinions than in Jesus' revealed Word. In today's Gospel we hear that those who did not compare Jesus with what the Bible promised concerning him missed out on who he really was; they knew a little of that Word but were not married to it. The real Jesus, the Savior and God-man, does not give himself apart from his Word. People are still divided about Jesus. God wants us to stay on the correct side of the divide from now until eternity. Therefore as we begin a new year of getting to know Jesus, let us listen ever more attentively to his Word, so that he may hold us close to himself through it.

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 Lesson¹

Micah 5:2-5a

One of the chief reasons why so many people reject the truth about the real Jesus is that he is hidden in such lowliness. They want a splendid looking Jesus, noble and heroic in appearance, who will bring outward peace and prosperity, and make me always happy. But the real Jesus comes from some no-account back water town in a country despised and defeated. When he comes, he comes as a shepherd of the flock whose full glory will not be evident until he comes the second time. For now his glory is real but hidden; it is hidden under the reality that he is gathering his people by his Word. As miraculously as he gathers them, so miraculously he preserves them in faith until faith is transformed into sight at his second coming. Your recognition of him and your holding to him is a miracle too. With the passing of each Christmas that miracle is more impressive than before. Still, after so often wandering, still he shepherds me by his Word and preserves me in his fold!

Second Lesson¹

Hebrews 2:10-18

It is the scandal of the cross that ties both of the miracles of Christmas together. It is on the cross that he suffers his ultimate shame and humiliation. It is in the Word that we see it all, that we see the Eternal God in the flesh tempted, suffering, dying for those who are tempted, suffering, dying. It is by the message of the cross that he declares himself as Savior in the congregation and then creates for himself brothers who trust in him by means of that declaration. We are knit together in the fellowship of the cross. Those who reject the Word reject both of the miracles of Christmas, the miracle of salvation and the miracle of faith in the Savior. That he did it is a miracle. That we believe it is a miracle, too. By his declaration it is accomplished and he is not ashamed to call us his brothers; for that is what he has made us by his cross and by the revelation of his cross and its saving merit.

Gospel of the Day¹

John 7:40-43

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really was; they knew a little of that Word but were not married to it. The real Jesus, the Savior and God-man, does not give himself apart from his Word. Therefore as we begin a new year of getting to know him; let us listen ever more attentively to his Word, so that he may hold us close to himself through it.

Psalm of the Day Psalm 148

God has raised up his Anointed One to bring salvation. As a result, everything in all creation is to praise the Lord. The Lord's goodness and glory fills all the earth with praise and thanksgiving.

Verse of the Day Psalm 98:3b

"All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God." God has revealed his salvation through the righteous acts performed on behalf of his people. We know God is righteous, loving, and faithful to his people because of what he has done for us and what he has told us in his Word. This testament to his covenant commitment is proclaimed to the nations.

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, you have filled us with the new light of the Word who became flesh and lived among us. Let the light of our faith shine in all that we do; through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Hymn of the Day 34 "Now Sing We, Now Rejoice" (Latin hymn, 14th century; tr. Arthur Russell, 1806-74, alt.)

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.

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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