



# ABOUT THE PROPERs

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



## Day of Pentecost

June 5, 2022



### The Gift of the Holy Spirit

Fifty days after the Passover, God's Old Testament people Israel would celebrate the gathering of the harvest at the *Festival of Weeks*. At the celebration fifty days after Christ's resurrection, God sent the promised Counselor on the day we call "Pentecost" (Greek for "the fiftieth (day)"). This outpouring of the Holy Spirit marked the birthday of the New Testament Church and Christians today continue to mark it as they celebrate the harvest of souls won by the Son and gathered by the Spirit. The color for the day is red to remind us of the tongues of fire that marked the Spirit's gift as well as the blood of the martyrs which served as the seed of the New Testament Church. Following the season of Easter, we now celebrate that our risen Lord empowers his people to be witnesses of the resurrection for the world.

### 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 <sup>1</sup>

Genesis 11:1-9

The self-glorifying pride of sinful hearts can be seen in the account of the Tower of Babel. The one language of creation was misused as a tool to keep people unified in idolatrous work. Language and tongues are confused in order to bring people to carry out the will of the Lord and fill the earth. At the same time, language and tongue would set apart the nation of Israel, limiting the proclamation of the Messianic promise through God's people. Centuries later, the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit brings about not only a reversal of Babel but proclamation of the promise fulfilled to the nations.

#### Second Lesson <sup>1</sup>

Acts 2:1-21

The Christ-promised coming of the Holy Spirit reverses the confusion of Babel as the disciples are given the gift of speaking in tongues. In a rush of wind and with tongues of flame the prophecy of Joel is fulfilled. The timidity of the Twelve dissolves in fiery witnessing to the Truth. What began in the streets of Jerusalem, is even now carried to the ends of the earth.

#### Gospel of the Day <sup>1</sup>

John 15:26,27

Pilate questioned it, the disciples were confused by it, but Jesus promised it: the Truth. Imagine the overwhelming task before the Twelve: truthful recollection of everything they had heard and seen! Yet the promise of coming Truth not only assured timid disciples then, but disciples today, of perfect recollection. The Spirit proceeded from the Father and the Son to testify not to subjective truth but to essential Truth: the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

#### Psalm of the Day

Psalm 51b

We continue to pray that the Holy Spirit comes to us to strengthen our faith and moved by the fire of his love, open our lips to declare his praises, guide us in holy living, and increase our joy in his gift of salvation.

#### Verse of the Day

"Alleluia. Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful people, and kindle in them the fire of your love. Alleluia." (*From the antiphon: Come, Holy Spirit*)

## Prayer of the Day

Holy Spirit, God and Lord, come to us this joyful day with your sevenfold gift of grace. Rekindle in our hearts the holy fire of your love that in a true and living faith we may tell abroad the glory of our Savior, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Father, one God, now and forever. Amen.

## Hymn of the Day

176 “Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord” (German hymn, 15<sup>th</sup> cent; Martin Luther, 1483-1546)

The hymn is a prayer inviting the Holy Spirit, as God and Lord, to come and fulfill his role as sanctifier. It was originally a Latin chant from the 11th century used at the Vespers of the Vigil of Pentecost. Martin Luther was familiar with a German version of the chant and was so moved by its content and tune that he remarked that the hymn must have been written by the Spirit Himself. Luther added two stanzas to the one of the chant to give us what we have today.

## Minor Festivals

St. Barnabas, Apostle (June 11)

Joseph, known to the apostles as “Barnabas,” was a Levite from Cyprus. He was an early convert to Christianity and supporter of the apostles (Acts 4:36). Luke described him as “a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith” (Acts 11:24). Barnabas vouched for Saul (later known as Paul, the apostle) when Saul came to Jerusalem to meet the other apostles for the first time after Jesus converted him. Barnabas later became a coworker with Paul and companion on his First Missionary journey (Acts 13:4 – 14:28). Though Paul and Barnabas later parted ways (Acts 15:36-41), Paul spoke well of him in his epistles (e.g. 1 Corinthians 9:6; Galatians 2:11-13).

## Church Year Season <sup>1</sup>

Easter

After forty days of repentance and prayer, the Church bursts forth in jubilant praise at the Resurrection of our Lord. The alleluias and glorias which were muted for Lent ring out again as the Bride of Christ welcomes her Bridegroom back from the dead. Easter is as the pinnacle of the Church Year, the oldest festival and season celebrated by the worshipping Church. For a full week-of-weeks (49 days) the Church celebrates the resurrection of Christ on the Sundays of Easter which culminate on the fiftieth day, Pentecost.

## Colors & Symbolism

The Day of Pentecost: Red

Red, the color of fire, is the color for the Festival of Pentecost. It signifies the appearance of what looked like tongues of fire over them when the Holy Spirit descended at the first Pentecost. The color red is also used for festivals of renewal in the Holy Spirit, such as Reformation, missions, and ordination. The color also reminds us of the blood of the martyrs – the believers of every generation who by the power of the Holy Spirit hold firm to the true faith even at the cost of their lives.

## Nain Paraments

Pentecost Sunday

Superfrontal: The Holy Spirit is often represented as a dove, recalling Jesus’ baptism when the Spirit descended from heaven “like a dove” (Matthew 3:16). The dove also reminds us of the Coming of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, when the apostles were baptized with the Spirit and with fire. The flames represent the tongues of fire that rested on the Apostles on Pentecost Sunday as they were “filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:4). To the left and right are the letters *Alpha* (Α) and *Omega* (Ω), the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. These two letters symbolize Jesus Christ, our eternal Lord and Savior, who is the first and the last, the beginning and the end (Revelation 22:13).

Lectern antependium: The shell with drops of water represents Holy Baptism. Ancient pictures of Jesus’ baptism show John the Baptist pouring water from a shell upon Jesus’ head as he stood in the waters of the Jordan River. Nothing in the Bible is said about John using a shell to apply water on Jesus, but the picture of a shell has long since been used in the Church to symbolize this sacrament of initiation into God’s Church. In some churches today baptisms are performed by pouring water from a shell.

Pulpit antependium: The book in front of the cross represents God’s Word in the Holy Bible. The main content of Holy Scripture is the good news of forgiveness of sins through the death of Jesus Christ, our Savior (John 20:31; 1 Corinthians 1:23). The significance of the Greek letters *Alpha* (Α) and *Omega* (Ω) is explained above in the description of the superfrontal.

[The significance of the crosses on the lectern and pulpit antependium is explained below]

The Cross is the most recognizable symbol for Jesus, his Church, his sacrificial death, and his victory over sin and death. The apostle St. Paul used the image of the cross as a way to sum up the Gospel of God’s saving work through Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 1:18; Galatians 6:14). On the cross, God’s Son suffered and died to pay for the sins of the world. By God’s grace and through faith, we are cleansed by Christ’s blood (Hebrews 10:10).

<sup>1</sup> Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year C”. Joel J. Gawrisch, Author; Jonathan E. Schroeder, Editor.  
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