



ABOUT THE PROPERs

An Explanation of the Variable Parts of the Divine Service



Holy Trinity

June 12, 2022



Faith that Trusts in the One True God

We have now entered fully into the Half Year of the Church. We never leave behind Christ and his work for us which was the center of our attention in the Half Year of Our Lord; but now the emphasis will shift to the result of his work through the Word: the work of defining faith, of creating it and inspiring its fruits in the church collectively and in each of us individually.

On the Feast of the Holy Trinity we see the Word creates faith in the Holy Trinity. The mystery of the Holy Trinity is beyond our comprehension. Yet it is proclaimed in Scripture and believed by Spirit-wrought hearts of faith. We believe in the one true God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The height, depth, and breadth of our God gives us peace as we travel towards eternity.

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

Numbers 6:22-27

The Aaronic blessing is an integral part of the Lord’s closing instructions at Mt. Sinai. The two-sided covenant of Sinai called for complete dedication of heart and mind to the almighty God of Israel. The idolatrous failures of God’s holy people were still fresh in their minds. Yet, Aaron and the priests are to assure the people of their Lord’s continued faithfulness, even in the face of Israel’s unfaithfulness. How impossible for human minds to possess a full understanding of the depths of God’s grace! But the Spirit comes, planting confidence in the heart that clings to the Father’s faithfulness and the eternal blessing he brings through the Son. On the road to the Promised Land or on the road of life, believers travel at peace in the Triune God’s three-fold blessing.

Second Lesson ¹

Romans 5:1-5

The Judge’s declaration of innocence would mean nothing were it not for faith. In love the Father pours out his Holy Spirit to give this forgiveness, life, and salvation to souls gripped by the fear of guilt and punishment. Gifted through the Father, made accessible through the Son, established by the Holy Spirit, we are assured of eternal peace with our Triune God. Suffer though we may, the Spirit continues to strengthen hearts that live in his grace.

Gospel of the Day ¹

John 16:12-15

On the night he was betrayed, perhaps even as they walked out to the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus warns his disciples that the truth is unbearable. But the Spirit of Truth would come to instruct, guide, and strengthen in the way of truth. With aching hearts they would witness the Suffering Savior fulfill his redemptive work, bringing eternal peace between God and humankind. Yet, it was not until the coming of the Holy Spirit that they would fully understand the fulfillment of promises made and kept by our Triune God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Psalm of the Day

Psalm 150

Joyful songs and hymns of praise are the fitting spontaneous response of the Christian heart to God's gift of himself to us in his Word and sacraments.

Verse of the Day

Isaiah 6:3b

"Alleluia. Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory. Alleluia." This was the call of the seraphs at Isaiah's commissioning. They were standing above the throne of the Lord in the throne room of heaven and praising God. Their threefold repetition of "holy" expresses that our God is supremely holy, and calls to mind the three Persons of the Holy Trinity.

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God and Father, dwelling in majesty and mystery, filling and renewing all creation by your eternal Spirit, and manifesting your saving grace through our Lord Jesus Christ: in mercy cleanse our hearts and lips that, free from doubt and fear, we may ever worship you, one true immortal God, with your Son and the Holy Spirit, living and reigning, now and forever. Amen.

Hymn of the Day

177 "Come, Holy Ghost, Creator Blest" (Rhabanus Maurus, 776-856)

This is one of the oldest of the ancient Latin hymns. It was written in the ninth century, but scholars are not sure of its author. The most likely one is Rhabanus Maurus, a monk, scholar, abbot and archbishop of Mainz in Germany. As the first stanza links the Holy Spirit to creation and filling the hearts of believers, stanza two calls on the Spirit as "Counselor" (cf. Romans 8:26).

Traditions

The Athanasian Creed

This creed is named after St. Athanasius, a staunch defender of the Christian faith in the fourth century. It was prepared to assist the Church in combating two errors that undermined Bible teaching. One error denied that God's Son and the Holy Spirit are of one being or Godhead with the Father. The other error denied that Jesus Christ is true God and true man in one person. The Athanasian Creed continues to serve the Christian Church as a standard of the truth. It declares that whoever rejects the doctrine of the Trinity and the doctrine of Christ is without the saving faith.

Church Year Season ¹

Sundays 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.

Colors & Symbolism

Holy Trinity: 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.

Nain Paraments

Easter

Superfrontal: *Alleluia* is taken from a Hebrew word which means, "Praise the LORD." It is a word of joy and gladness and most commonly used in the Psalms (e.g. 103). An ancient custom is to refrain from using the term during Lent in order to distinguish the penitential nature of that season from the joy and hope filled nature of the Easter season that follows. The vines and vegetation branching out from the *Alleluia* represent the spiritual life that Jesus, the vine brings to God's children, the branches (John 15:5).

Lectern antependium: The doves flying in front of the cross represent purity, innocence (Matthew 10:16), as well as spiritual and eternal rest (Psalm 55:6). When the dove has an olive branch or leaf in its beak, it is a symbol of hope and peace (Genesis 8:11). Each of these blessings and more come by Jesus' death on the cross and through the gift of faith (Galatians 1:3,4).

Pulpit antependium: The cross is formed by the Greek letters Chi (X) and Rho (P). Chi and Rho are the first two letters in the Greek word for Christ (Χριστός). This ancient symbol represents Jesus and his office as the Messiah, the anointed King of kings and Savior of the world (Matthew 16:16). The vines and vegetation branching out from the cross represent the spiritual life that Jesus, the vine brings to God's children, the branches (John 15:5).

¹ Courtesy of "Planning Christian Worship: Year C". Joel J. Gawrisch, Author; Jonathan E. Schroeder, Editor.
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