



ABOUT THE PROPERs

An Explanation of the Variable Parts of the Divine Service



Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

June 23, 2024



A Top-Down Faith

Our Gracious God Is with Us through All the Storms of Life

The raw power and unpredictability of storms can inspire both awe and terror. We cannot stop storms from coming. We can only hope to survive them. However, we know the Almighty God can stop storms. He can calm literal storms. He could remove metaphorical storms, other types of troubles and trials. So, if he can, why doesn't he? Well, would you rather have a God who was distant from you but removed all the storms of life? Or would you rather have a God who allowed some storms to come but promised to be right there by your side within them, holding you close? May God give us the top-down faith that sees that the latter is by far the better option. God promises to be with us through all the storms of life. Sometimes he removes them. But when he doesn't, it's only because he has plans to use even storms for our eternal good.

The Propers

The Propers are those portions of the service that change (i.e. 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 Reading²

Job 38:1-11

In the storms of life we are tempted to take God to court, to call him to account. That's what Job wanted to do, too. On the contrary, in the storms of life it is God who is calling us to account: Will we trust his Word and promise or our own reason, will, emotions, and the outward evidence that all is lost? Or will faith remain a dead abstraction, cut off from the promises of God in the life we live in the veil of tears. Have you heard people say: "Since God permitted thus and such to happen, I don't believe in him anymore." How foolish and perverse! As though God owed us an explanation for anything that he sees fit to do or permit! Such explanation as there is, is found in his Word which bids us trust him in weal and woe. His Word he will always keep. In due course he will make his purposes clear, often in this life, but perfectly in heaven.

Second Reading²

Acts 27:13-26

Sometimes disasters have this as their one single purpose: To teach us to despair of ourselves, our wisdom, our efforts, and to trust solely in God's providence and promises. God does not tell Paul the why of the shipwreck. Nor does Paul attempt to explain it apart from God's Word. Paul had the promise that he would appear before Caesar, and therefore he knew that he would not drown. He had the promise that the sailors would not perish, and therefore he could assure them of the same. But why they all had to go through this terrible experience God had not told him. Paul's business was to trust the promise and providence of God, and then to share that promise whatever his outward circumstance might be. A hard lesson to learn, and one that must often be learned anew; but, as the gospel lesson shows us, when we do not trust his promise, we have only fear and torment that accomplish nothing but more fear and torment.

Gospel²

Mark 4:35-41

What a magnificent mirror of the mix of fleshly unbelief and childlike trust that describes us so often in our lives! On the one hand the disciples have heard his words of love and grace and have believed them; they even trust that he is perfectly able to help. But in their distress, having tried to do everything on their own first, they can't imagine that he would keep his Word *to them*. He promised that they would be fishers of men—an impossible promise for him to keep if they perish! How kind of Jesus to put up with us! How gracious of him to wait with his help until we have learned that the only ultimate help is from him, a lesson we would never learn without suffering,

without the brink of disaster or despair from time to time. Hold fast to the promise that Jesus will not leave us or forsake, not even in death!

Psalm of the Day⁴ Psalm 42 C “Why Does Such Grief Weigh Down My Soul”

The Church sings Psalm 42 in services that recognize the reality of forces hindering the preaching of the gospel, whether those are natural storms or human opposition. This psalm begins Book II of the Psalter, where the Hebrew word for God (Elohim) is more common than the Hebrew word of Lord (Yahweh). Psalms 42 and 43 are a pair.

Gospel Acclamation Mark 4:41

“They were terrified and asked each other, ‘Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him.’”

Prayer of the Day

O Lord our God, so govern the nations on earth and direct the affairs of this world that your church may worship you in peace and joy; 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 501 “Evening and Morning” (Paul Gerhardt, 1607–1676)

Church Year Season¹ Season 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 Green

Green is the color of life, refreshment, growth, and regeneration. Whereas the first half of the Church Year (the “Festival Half” or the “Half Year of Our Lord”) focused on the life of Christ during his earthly ministry, the emphasis for the second half (the “Non-Festival half” or the “Half Year of the Church”) shifts to the result of Christ’s work through the Word: the work of defining and creating faith, and inspiring its fruits. The theme of the Christian’s growth in faith (like healthy green plants) fills the season.

Minor Festivals Nativity of St. John the Baptist (June 24)

Presentation of the Augsburg Confession (June 25)

Nain Paraments Sundays after Pentecost

Superfrontal: When Isaiah was called to be a prophet of the LORD, two seraphs (a class of angels) appeared and called out to one another, “Holy, Holy, Holy” (Isaiah 6:3). The threefold repetition of the divine adjective emphasizes the infinite holiness of the Triune God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Some congregations count the Sundays in this season of the Church Year as the Sundays after the festival of the Holy Trinity, calling it the “Trinity season,” or the “Sundays after Trinity.” That is why most paraments for this season feature symbols of the Holy Trinity.

Lectern antependium: The equilateral triangle is one of the oldest emblems of the Holy Trinity. The three equal sides and angles represent the equality, unity, and co-eternal nature of the three persons of the Trinity. Though they are three distinct persons, they are of one essence as one God (Deuteronomy 6:4). The three interwoven circles represent the three members of the Trinity and emphasize their unity and eternal nature; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are without beginning or end.

Pulpit antependium: At each point of the triangle (the significance of the triangle is explained above) is a nimbus, Latin for *cloud*. The nimbus appears as a circle, or a halo. In Christian artwork, nimbi surround the head of the Father (when he is depicted as a human), Jesus Christ, or the Holy Spirit (when he is depicted as a dove) to signify their glory and holiness. In artistic depictions of believers (saints), nimbi are placed around their heads to show that they have been made holy by God’s grace in Christ and through faith. The three fish in between the nimbi and that meet in the middle of the triangle signify Christians who are united to the Triune God by faith. Fish have come to represent the followers of Jesus because believers have been brought into the ship of God’s church through the efforts of those who proclaim Gospel (cf. “fishers of men” in Matthew 4:19).

¹ Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year A”. Jonathan E. Schroeder, Author.

² Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year B”. Daniel M. Deutschlander, Author.

³ Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year C”. Joel J. Gawrisch, Author.

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