



# ABOUT THE PROPER

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



## Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

July 21, 2024



### *Meaningful Ministry*

Jesus Models a Compassionate Shepherd's Heart

In Scripture, meaningful ministry is often pictured as a compassionate shepherd caring for his sheep: Jesus' care for us; a spiritual leader's care for his "flock." Certainly, carrying out the Ministry of the Gospel requires a compassionate heart. An individual might know God's Word backwards and forwards. But if they lack compassion, they will not fully perform meaningful ministry. Today, we ask the Spirit to see how Jesus models a compassionate shepherd's heart so that ministers today might be filled with that same compassion.

#### **First Reading**<sup>2</sup>                      Jeremiah 23:1-6

*Woe!* What a punch that word has when it comes from God. And come it does over those who falsify and adulterate his pure Word. False doctrine destroys and scatters the sheep of his pasture. Oh, to be sure, he will always find a way to gather in his elect. But woe to those who hinder him in that work, and thus conceal from the doomed and dying world *The LORD Our Righteousness*, who gives his righteousness, who gives himself in his pure Word and Sacraments. May we be found faithful!

#### **Second Reading**                      Hebrews 13:7-8, 17-21

These words urge a particular response to the gospel in those who proclaim it and in those who hear it. Frail and imperfect as their leaders may be, the leaders do well to live honorably and with a conscience that need not accuse them of unfaithfulness to either the law or the gospel. When congregations have such leaders, the leaders will not be placing stumbling blocks in front of the respect that is their due for the sake of the work, of the gospel. For faithfulness to the Word on the part of the leaders equips the hearers for faithfulness, for doing what is pleasing and what glorifies our God and only Savior, our chief Pastor, Jesus Christ.

#### **Gospel**<sup>2</sup>                                      Mark 6:30-34

May we ever be eager to do what the disciples did, to report to him *all* that we have done and taught. To be sure there is still sin to confess. But the one who looks forward to reporting to Jesus all that he has done and taught will not soon degenerate into a mere professional, whose goal is to win the praise of the crowd and ultimately (whether he knows and it admits or not) a following for himself. Jesus will be delighted to hear us. More than that, he will know and understand that because of the weakness of our mortal frames we have become worn and tired in the struggle against the enemy inside ourselves as well as foes of the gospel on the outside. And so he will take us aside—ah, what a delight!—and go with us to a quiet place where we may hear him and feast on his words for us, just for us. That's what he invites us to receive from him in our private and very solitary devotional life, separate from what we do and prepare also for others. Those who understand these things have no difficulty applying this text in urging members to also go away to a quiet place with Jesus every day before they must rush off into the world and to its pressures and demands. May we and they with us love both: to feed and to be fed.

#### **Psalm of the Day**<sup>4</sup>                      Psalm 23 A                      "I Will Live in the House of the LORD"

The Church sings Psalm 23 in services that honor Jesus as the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep. It is frequently read or sung at funerals, calling to mind the presence of the Lord as Christians go through the valley of the shadow of death.

**Gospel Acclamation** Mark 6:34

“Jesus had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd.”

**Prayer of the Day**

O God, the strength of all who trust in you, mercifully hear our prayers. Be gracious to us in our weakness, and give us strength to keep your commandments in all we say and do; 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** 551 “Jesus, Shepherd of the Sheep” (Henry Cook, 1788-1868)

**Church Year Season**<sup>1</sup> 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** St. Mary Magdalene (July 22)  
St. James the Elder, Apostle (July 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).

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

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

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

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