



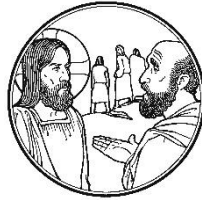
ABOUT THE PROPER

An Explanation of the Variable Parts of the Divine Service



Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

August 25, 2024



I Am the Bread of Life

The Only Food We Really Need

As Jesus concluded his Bread of Life discourse, many remarked, “This is a hard teaching! Who can listen to it?” and walked away. Notice that they did not say the teaching was hard to understand. The meaning was clear enough. Jesus was teaching that the only chance to enjoy eternity in heaven is through a close connection to him. He is the only one who gives eternal life. That isn’t hard to understand, but it is hard to accept because only the Holy Spirit can bring us to such faith. Jesus watched the multitudes walked away from him. He turned to the Twelve – and he turns to us this week – and asked, “You do not want to leave too, do you?” May the Spirit give us the wisdom to answer like Peter did, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.”

First Reading²

Joshua 24:1,2, 14-18

We want to answer with Joshua and with the children of Israel at Joshua’s farewell. Those answers were right answers. The history of Israel demonstrates that such an answer once given isn’t necessarily an answer given once and for all. Many of the children of Israel soon turned their back on the Lord and forgot his grace in favor of the gods of this world. What is your answer today? May you repeat it each day. May you fix it firmly in your mind as you turn to the business and pleasures of the day, lest you forget, and you also go away.

Second Reading²

Hebrews 11:24-28

By the standard of the world Moses was a fool. But God trained him early in life to cling to the promises of God rather than to the wisdom and wealth and pleasure of the Egyptians. He had no outward evidence that God’s wisdom was preferable and ultimately the only true wisdom. But so powerful was the promise, that in spite of all the evidence to the contrary he continued to cling to the promise implicit especially in the Passover. We used to put blinders on horses so that they would not be distracted by what was going on around them but would pull the wagon straight ahead. May we close our eyes to the distractions of the world’s wisdom and pleasure and look only to the wisdom which is not only true but saving.

Gospel²

John 6:51-69

The stumbling block thrown in his path by the rationalism of many in the crowd does not move Jesus to soften the message. Instead he repeats it with emphasis. Through their own fault many of the hearers, yes, even one of the Twelve, refuse to bend their thinking to his Word. Instead of the attitude of Samuel, Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening, their response is, Listen, we are speaking and this is what WE think! But Jesus is the one who descended for our salvation. Jesus is the one who went back to the right hand of the Father to rule all things in heaven and on earth. Jesus is the one who will return to judge all mankind. Do you really think your opinion matters or that it is more likely to be on the mark than his? What folly! But still many came and then went away. How many times in your life have you been tempted to go away to what your own wisdom preferred? How many times have you actually done it? But today, hear his voice and answer: Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God!

Psalm of the Day⁴

Psalm 119 D

“Teach Me, O LORD”

The Church sings Psalm 119 in services that encourage us to take the Word of God seriously. Martin Luther said, “Psalm 119 is a thorough meditation on the Word of God. It is useful for prayer and for disproving the claims of the devil and false teachers. It contains all kinds of prayer, comfort, instruction, and thanksgiving, pleasing God and grieving the devil.”

Gospel Acclamation

John 6:68

“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.” After Jesus once again clearly identified himself as the Son of Man who must sacrifice himself for the sins of the world, many of his disciples deserted him. Jesus then asked the Twelve if they too wanted to leave. Simon Peter responded with the proper understanding that Christ’s Word is spirit and life, and that those who believe in it and in Jesus as their Savior have eternal salvation.

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, whom to know is everlasting life, grant us to know your Son, Jesus, to be the way, the truth, and the life that we may boldly confess him to be the Christ and steadfastly walk in the way that leads to life eternal; 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

631 “Speak, O Savior, I Am Listening” (Anna Sophia of Hesse-Darmstadt, 1638-83)

This hymn is based in part on young Samuel’s response to the Lord’s call (1 Samuel 3:10). Moved by God’s grace given to us through faith, we too desire to hear the Word of the Lord and respond to his call to follow and serve him. The hymnist uses several terms for God’s Word (e.g. God’s “voice,” “waters living,” “bread life-giving,” “light,” “sword,” “cup unfailing”), and several phrases to describe what a great blessing the Word is in the life of a believer.

Church Year Season ¹

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

Martyrdom of St. John the Baptist (August 29)

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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