



ABOUT THE PROPER

An Explanation of the Variable Parts of the Divine Service



Last Sunday after Epiphany Transfiguration of Our Lord

March 2, 2025



Epiphany Moments

Glory Is Hidden in Order to Be Revealed

Would you like to look directly at God? It sounds wonderful in theory. Yet Scripture describes God's glory as being brighter than the sun. Moreover, one component of God's glory is his holiness. Being holy doesn't just mean God loves good. It also means he hates evil with burning intensity. And we sin every day. No wonder the Lord once told Moses, "No one may see me and live" (Exodus 33:20). Sinners would die of fear if they saw God in all his holy glory.

So, how then can we possibly know God? How can we draw near to him without dying of terror? In our final epiphany moment of this season, God explains. God hides his glory in order to reveal himself. To carry out his good and glorious work of salvation, Jesus hid his glory and went to the cross. To allow sinners to stare at his glory without fear or harm, God hides it in the gospel. In the gospel, we see the glory of Christ's love, power, and salvation. The reality is that when God's glory is hidden, it is most on display.

First Reading³ Exodus 34:29-35

There was not another prophet like Moses. The Lord knew him face-to-face. When he came down from Mount Sinai after receiving God's Law, the radiant glory of the Lord could be seen reflected in his face. With hearts veiled by the shame of sin, the people of Israel could not look upon Moses' face. The stark contrast between the Lord's glory and our own darkened countenances reminds us of our guilt yet foretells of the glory that awaits us through the Lord's Anointed.

Second Reading³ 2 Corinthians 3:7-18

Paul declares that the glory of the old Covenant is removed as the New Covenant is established in Christ Jesus. The New Covenant of grace far surpasses the glory of the Old Covenant of law. The glory of the New Covenant is hidden in the work of Christ and revealed through the work of the Holy Spirit. Through the power of the Spirit, the glory of the New Covenant is ours, reflected in lives lived to the glory of the Lord.

Gospel³ Luke 9:28-36

Once again Jesus is revealed as the Lord's Anointed. Basking in the divine glory that has been his from eternity, the Son of Man is proclaimed to be God the Son with the approval of God the Father. We stand with Moses and Elijah, the disciples, and saints throughout the ages in this sure and certain hope: the Christ has come and our salvation is at hand.

Psalm of the Day⁴ Psalm 2 B "Why Do the Nations Conspire"

The Church sings Psalm 2 in services that emphasize the relationship of the Father and the Son. The Son rules with the same authority as the Father even when government officials try to thwart God's rule. The New Testament frequently quotes this psalm as applying to Christ, the Son of David. Martin Luther said, "Psalm 2 is a prophecy of how Christ will suffer and become King and Lord of the entire world. This psalm promises that those who believe in Christ will be blessed. Through Christ, God has delivered us from sin, death, and hell, and brought us to eternal life. This is the blessing that we pray for in the Second Petition of the Lord's Prayer, that his kingdom come."

Gospel Acclamation

Mark 9:7

“A cloud covered them, and a voice came from the cloud: ‘This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!’” The voice of God the Father from the cloud (a symbol of God’s presence) declares Jesus to be his beloved Son, repeating his announcement from Jesus’ baptism. The Father’s command to listen to Jesus reminds us that we are saved through the Word of Christ.

Prayer of the Day

O God, in the glorious transfiguration of your only-begotten Son, you confirmed the mysteries of the faith by the testimony of Moses and Elijah, and in the voice that came from the bright cloud, you foreshadowed our adoption as your sons. In your mercy, make us co-heirs of glory with Jesus our King, and bring us at last to heaven; 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

388 “Down from the Mount of Glory” (Werner Franzmann, 1905-1996)

The hymnist tells the story of Jesus at his transfiguration (vv1-2), and his subsequent journey to the cross on the Mount of Calvary, to suffer in our place (vv3-4). Two different mountains: one showing our Lord’s majesty, the other his humility – both needed to save us.

Church Year Season ¹

Epiphany

The readings during the Epiphany season carry forward the emphasis in the readings for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, the theme of Jesus revealing himself to us as God and Savior. At the same time the readings present us with a real conundrum. The conundrum is that he hides the manifestations of his deity, so that his glory remains a secret and a mystery, even while he is revealing it. All the riddles are present in the readings for the Feast of the Epiphany. The theme present in all of the Epiphany readings is: He shows his hidden glory to those he calls. You may notice that in many of the Epiphany season readings appropriation is much easier than application. There is a good reason for that: In Christmas and Epiphany our attention is on getting to know Jesus, who he is and how he works; thus there is not so much emphasis on our response beyond the response of faith, which itself is always seen as his work and not ours.

Colors & Symbolism

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.

Traditions & Customs

Transfiguration of Our Lord

Transfiguration is a distinctly Lutheran addition to the Christian calendar. In the 16th century, Johannes Bugenhagen and Veit Dietrich placed the celebration at the end of Epiphany before Lent, remembering that Jesus descended the Mount of Glory and set his face toward Jerusalem (Luke 9:51). On Transfiguration, the Church says “farewell” to alleluias. The Church refrains from using her most jubilant words of praise during the muted celebration of Lent. The alleluias will return with the risen Lord at the celebration of Easter.

Nain Paraments

Christmas

Superfrontal: “Immanuel” is Hebrew for “God with us.” This name for Jesus Christ was revealed to God’s people through Isaiah in a prophecy of the Savior’s birth (7:14). The angel Gabriel announced to Joseph in a dream that the child in the Virgin Mary’s womb would be that promised Immanuel – God who had come to be with us (Matthew 1:23) in order to save us. Sometimes the name is spelled *Emmanuel*, which is the Latin alphabet transliteration of the Hebrew pronunciation of the same name.

The vines next to Immanuel represent the spiritual life that Jesus, the vine brings to God’s children, the branches (John 15:5).

Lectern antependium: *The Greek Cross*: distinguished by four arms of equal length.

Pulpit antependium: *The Celtic Cross*: similar to the Latin cross (†), but with a circle surrounding the center, which symbolizes the eternal nature of Christ and the gift of eternal life to all who believe in him.

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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