



ABOUT THE PROPERs

An Explanation of the Variable Parts of the Divine Service



Third Sunday in Lent

March 23, 2025



“Open Door Policies”

Always Present, Always Patient

Our Heavenly Father is always present in the lives of his children. He sees every sorrow we endure. He also sees every sin that we commit, even if it's only in our thoughts. He is always present. Yet, he is also always patient. God does not snap at us the second we turn from him. He gives us time to see the error of our ways. He assures us that the door back to him remains always open. By giving us room to share our struggles and shortcomings, he works in us the very repentance he desires and saves us from the judgement that would otherwise be ours.

First Reading³

Exodus 3:1-15

Flames of fire that did not consume. Ground too holy for sandals, but not for sinful flesh. God appearing in power, but calling himself the LORD, the God of free and faithful love. Such are the contradictions of Law and Gospel. Today, Christ calls on us to be fruitful followers, and in this lesson he gives us the motivation to do it: our God is the great I AM, the God of the living, the God of deliverance for his people and forgiveness for his children.

Second Reading³

1 Corinthians 10:1-13

The Lord had delivered his people in spectacular fashion. Israel had every reason to trust whole-heartedly in his promises, relying on their rock, the Christ. Yet so many served their own bodies, even seeking the favor of other false gods. Let Israel's example serve as warning. Turn from temptation, leave sin behind, trust in the Lord's faithfulness to forgive, bear abundant fruit, and follow the Way out of this world to eternal life.

Gospel³

Luke 13:1-9

Traipsing along our journey in the uncertainty of self-righteous self-reliance will only lead to ruin and destruction. Christ calls each of us to closely examine our lives for the fruit of repentance. The gardener is patient and long suffering, but knows well, that a tree without fruit will be cut down. However, bending to the gardener's hand in true repentance will lead to a fruitful life here and eternal life hereafter.

Psalm of the Day⁴

Psalm 85 A

“LORD, in Your Mercy Hear My Prayer”

The Church sings Psalm 85 in services where we encounter the holiness of God, leading us to repentance and peace through faith in Jesus our holy Savior. The psalm uses the covenant name LORD one time in each of its four sections. Martin Luther said, “Psalm 85 is a prayer psalm. The psalmist asks that God withhold his wrath and supply his grace. In my opinion, God shows his wrath when he withholds his Word, faithful preaching, good government, peace, and a good economy. When he allows these things in his grace, people are able to live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness, as St. Paul teaches us in 1 Timothy 2:2.”

Gospel Acclamation

2 Peter 3:9

“He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”

Prayer of the Day

O God, whose glory it is always to have mercy, be gracious to all who have gone astray from your ways, and bring them again with penitent hearts and steadfast faith to embrace and hold fast the unchangeable truth of your Word; 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 712 “Delay Not! Delay Not” (Thomas Hastings, 1784-1872)

Church Year Season² Lent

The season of Lent leads the Church on a forty-day journey of repentance and prayer, of remembrance and renewal of our baptism. God calls to mankind: Return to the Lord! The journey begins with Ash Wednesday’s warning of mortality and culminates at the Service of Holy Baptism in the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday.

The Church’s Lenten worship is muted and quiet. For centuries, the Church has omitted her most jubilant songs of praise during this season of repentance (e.g. the “Gloria in Excelsis,” and the use of the word “Alleluia”) to reflect the somber nature of the season. Note, however, that the Sundays are designated as Sunday in Lent, not Sundays of Lent. The Sundays themselves are not considered part of the forty days, but are islands of refreshment in our Lenten walk.

Colors & Symbolism Lent: Purple or Violet

These colors are a sign of royalty, self-discipline, sorrow and repentance. Purple also reminds us of sacrifice, not only because that colored clothing was very expensive (sacrifice of money), but also because in order to make purple clothing in ancient times, one had to dye the cloth in the blood of snails (sacrifice of life). Thus purple is a fitting color for the penitential season of Lent, during which we focus more intentionally on our sinfulness, and how our King and Savior, Jesus Christ suffered in our place and sacrificed himself on the cross to take away our sins.

Minor Festivals Annunciation of Our Lord (March 25)

This festival commemorates the angel Gabriel’s announcement to the Virgin Mary that she would give birth to the incarnate Son of the Most High, Jesus (Luke 1:26-38). The festival originated in Constantinople and was accepted in Rome about 600 A.D. Marking the first moment of the Christ’s Incarnation, it was designated for March 25th, nine months before Christmas Day.

Nain Paraments Lent

Superfrontal: The lamb at the center of the parament represents Jesus, the Lamb of God who was sacrificed to take away the sin of the world (John 1:29; 3:16-17). The nimbus (halo) around its head reminds us that Jesus was a perfect sacrifice, even greater than the unblemished lambs required of the Passover meal (Exodus 12:5).

The palm branches remind us of Jesus’ triumphant entry into Jerusalem on the Sunday before he died (John 12:13). Palm branches were used in celebration of victory. Jesus entered Jerusalem to conquer sin, death, and the devil. Our crucified and risen Lord assures us in his Word that his victory is ours by faith (1 Corinthians 15:57).

[The significance of the crosses on the far left and right of the superfrontal are explained below]

Lectern & Pulpit antependia: The cross formed by four nails represents Jesus’ death by which he was nailed to the cross (Luke 23:33; John 20:25,27). The white sash around the arms of the cross symbolizes Jesus’ righteousness and his perfect victory over our enemies through his resurrection (Romans 4:25; 1 Corinthians 15:20-23;54-57).

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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