



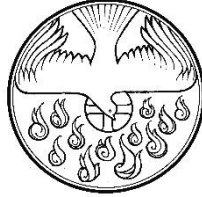
ABOUT THE PROPERS

An Explanation of the Variable Parts of the Divine Service



Day of Pentecost

May 19, 2024



Resurrection Reality

Christ Has Not Left Us Alone

Jesus told his disciples that, though he was going to ascend into heaven, he wasn't going to leave them alone. He was going to send "the Advocate," a title for the Holy Spirit. But Jesus wasn't sending the Spirit just to keep us company. Jesus would have the Advocate give us spiritual power so that we might participate in Christ's saving work. The Spirit gives us the ability to raise the spiritually dead to life. We see this happen on Pentecost. The festival of Pentecost was held fifty days after the Passover. (Pentecost is Greek for "fifty.") It was a time to thank God for the harvest. But on that day, through the Church at work, the Holy Spirit gathered another harvest, a harvest of souls.

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

Ezekiel 37:1-14

The breath of God is active and life-giving where the Word is proclaimed exactly as he gave it. Ezekiel preaches only what God told him to preach, even when preaching to dry bones. The whole of humanity is nothing but dry bones until God breathes his Word on them. He does it still when and where *his* Word is proclaimed and not apart from it. To say that the Spirit is active and to say that his Word is powerful is to say the same thing. He breathed at creation and brought all things into existence. He breathes in the gospel and conquered our spiritual death, bringing us to Jesus and Jesus to us. On the last day he will breathe again and wake all the dead and take us to be with God in heaven forever. Where should we expect to experience the breath of God? Nowhere else than where his Word is that is in the church as she breathes his Word in all its truth and purity! Everywhere else God sees only bones that stay dry and dead!

Second Reading²

Acts 2:1-21

The breath of God is both violent and gentle. Its violence is in the mighty wind. It is in the signs and wonders that he will speak into being to accompany the end of the age, prefigured by the mighty wind on this day. His violent breath however does not create faith. It creates curiosity this day, and one day will inspire dread in those who have not listened to his gentle voice in the gospel. It is when he breathes words through his apostles and prophets that he is most mighty *for us*. For then he creates faith which calls on the Name of the Lord, the Savior. That is the Spirit's real work and glory, bringing us to trust in Jesus for our salvation. Fear is gone and replaced with joyful confidence wrought by the Spirit in the gospel.

Gospel¹

John 15:26-27; 16:4b-11

How could Jesus' departure be advantageous for the disciples? Only when Jesus had finished his redemptive work and returned to the Father would he send the Counselor. At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit fulfilled this promise of Jesus as the Counselor who would work on the world by dwelling in his disciples. His great work is to convict the world in regard to sin, righteousness and judgment. As the Holy Spirit prompted the disciples to preach the Gospel, both believers and unbelievers heard and were convicted in regard to sin—resulting in either repentance or obduracy. The Holy Spirit convicts the world in regard to righteousness, because the purchase price for righteousness had now been paid, ("I am going to the Father"), and the world would either receive it by faith or reject it in unbelief. The Holy Spirit convicts the world in regard to judgment, because although the world has not yet been judged, its ruler has (Revelation 20). The preaching of the Gospel never leaves hearts the same: by either quickening or hardening, the Spirit convicts mankind.

Psalm of the Day⁴

Psalm 104 A

“LORD, Send Out Your Spirit” The Church sings Psalm 104 in services that emphasize the work of the Holy Spirit. It focuses especially on the work of creation. Martin Luther said, ‘Psalm 104 is a psalm of thanksgiving for things besides human beings that God has created in the heavens and on the earth. The psalmist recounts how delightful and orderly all of God’s creation is, evoking pleasure and joy. But who pays attention or even notices? Only faith and the spirit.’”

Gospel Acclamation

Antiphon for Pentecost

“Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful people, and kindle in them the fire of your love.”

Prayer of the Day

Holy Spirit, God and Lord, come to us this joyful day with your sevenfold gift of grace. Rekindle in our hearts the holy fire of your love that in a true and living faith we may tell abroad the glory of our Savior, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Father, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Hymn of the Day

585 “Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord” (German hymn, 15th cent; Martin Luther, 1483-1546)

The hymn is a prayer inviting the Holy Spirit, as God and Lord, to come and fulfill his role as sanctifier. It was originally a Latin chant from the 11th century used at the Vespers of the Vigil of Pentecost. Martin Luther was familiar with a German version of the chant and was so moved by its content and tune that he remarked that the hymn must have been written by the Spirit Himself. Luther added two stanzas to the one of the chant to give us what we have today.

Church Year Season¹

Easter

After forty days of repentance and prayer, the Church bursts forth in jubilant praise at the Resurrection of our Lord. The alleluias and glorias which were muted for Lent ring out again as the Bride of Christ welcomes her Bridegroom back from the dead. Easter is as the pinnacle of the Church Year, the oldest festival and season celebrated by the worshipping Church. For a full week-of-weeks (49 days) the Church celebrates the resurrection of Christ on the Sundays of Easter which culminate on the 50th day, Pentecost.

Colors & Symbolism

Red

Red, the color of fire, is the color for the Festival of Pentecost. It signifies the appearance of what looked like tongues of fire over them when the Holy Spirit descended at the first Pentecost. The color red is also used for festivals of renewal in the Holy Spirit, such as Reformation, missions, and ordination. The color also reminds us of the blood of the martyrs – the believers of every generation who by the power of the Holy Spirit hold firm to the true faith even at the cost of their lives.

Nain Paraments

Day of Pentecost

Superfrontal: The Holy Spirit is often represented as a dove, recalling Jesus’ baptism when the Spirit descended from heaven “like a dove” (Matthew 3:16). The dove also reminds us of the Coming of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, when the apostles were baptized with the Spirit and with fire. The flames represent the tongues of fire that rested on the Apostles on Pentecost Sunday as they were “filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:4). To the left and right are the letters *Alpha* (Α) and *Omega* (Ω), the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. These two letters symbolize Jesus Christ, our eternal Lord and Savior, who is the first and the last, the beginning and the end (Revelation 22:13).

Lectern antependium: The shell with drops of water represents Holy Baptism. Ancient pictures of Jesus’ baptism show John the Baptist pouring water from a shell upon Jesus’ head as he stood in the waters of the Jordan River. Nothing in the Bible is said about John using a shell to apply water on Jesus, but the picture of a shell has long since been used in the Church to symbolize this sacrament of initiation into God’s Church. In some churches today baptisms are performed by pouring water from a shell.

Pulpit antependium: The book in front of the cross represents God’s Word in the Holy Bible. The main content of Holy Scripture is the good news of forgiveness of sins through the death of Jesus Christ, our Savior (John 20:31; 1Corinthians 1:23). The significance of the Greek letters *Alpha* (Α) and *Omega* (Ω) is explained above in the description of the superfrontal.

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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