

Pentecost 3 – June 13, 2021

Text: Introit/Opening Hymn

Theme: Worship Series 3 "What Are We Going to Hear Today?"

As we continue our sermon series on worship, today we look at the Introit at the beginning of the Service of the Word. After we have rung the doorbell of the mansion with the Invocation, wiped our feet with the confession and absolution, we are ready to enter into God's presence. It can either be a hymn or it can be the Introit which is a psalm appointed for the day which is what Mary chose for today. Introit means "he enters in" for it was sung as the pastor entered in through the Nave and the Chancel into the Sanctuary in a processional, and in the early Church there was often a processional every Sunday because that is the way the priests got to the Sanctuary.

Remember that there are three rooms in this building. We call the whole thing the Sanctuary, but really there are three separate rooms only one of which is the Sanctuary. The Nave, from the Latin "navis," which means ship is where the congregation sits. It is designed architecturally like an upside-down ship to remind us of Noah's ark through which God saved his people from the flood. Similarly, this place of worship is our sanctuary from the world and through the waters of Holy Baptism, we have been saved from Hell.

Then there is the chancel, the area where the pulpit and lectern are. This area is where the Word of God is read aloud and, in some churches, where the choir sits to help lead worship.

The final room is where the altar is. This is the Sanctuary where the body and blood of Christ reside to be given at Holy Communion. The Sanctuary is similar to the Holy of Holies in the Temple of Solomon and the tabernacle of Moses. That is why we bow when we enter it or leave it. It is the throne room of God. His actual body and blood are right there on the altar. During the Introit, I make my way from the Nave, through the chancel and into the Sanctuary to prepare for the Kyrie which is what we will talk about next week.

The Introit ties into the themes put forward by the readings for the day, the prayer of the day, and the hymn of the day. Likewise, you will generally hear the themes of the day echoed in the sermon. We have remembered our Baptisms in the Invocation, heard the proclamation of our forgiveness in the Absolution, and now we stand before the throne with all the angels and all the saints who are already there, and we prepare to sing to and speak to God. Exciting things are about to come as the momentum builds. We are the saints of God and we sing his praise as we stand ready to receive his gifts.

Margaret sends out the bulletin each week prior to worship via email. It is a good practice to spend some time before worship preparing yourself to worship and one of the ways you can do this is by reading the Introit or entrance hymn, the readings, the prayer of the day and the hymn of the day. This is how you find the theme of a particular Sunday. We are a liturgical congregation so you can grasp the theme of every Sunday by reading over these parts of the liturgy.

Right now, we are in what is called the season of Pentecost. Pentecost is a season that goes from the day of Pentecost to the Last Sunday of the Church year in November. We divide it into four sections. We call the first section Pentecost, and it goes from the day of Pentecost to the Nativity of St. John the Baptist which is always June 24th. The second section is St. John's Tide from The Nativity of St. John the Baptist until the Feast of St. Lawrence which is August 10th. The third section is St. Lawrence Tide which is from The Feast of St. Lawrence to the Feast of St. Michael and All Angels which is September 29th. Finally, St. Michaelmas is from St. Michael and All Angels to the Last Sunday of the Church Year which always falls five Sundays before Christmas.

Each of these times carry its own theme. Pentecost's theme is the coming of the Holy Spirit and birth of the Church. St. John's Tide

is the growth of faith in the Church. St. Lawrence Tide looks at the persecution of the Church and St. Michaelmas celebrates the triumph of the Church over the world.

Today, look at the Introit, the Collect of the Day, the readings and the hymn of the day and you can see how they all revolve around the coming of the Holy Spirit and the birth of the Church. Sometimes we have an Introit and sometimes we have an opening hymn but they both serve the same purpose. The Introit this week is from Psalm 92 which is the only psalm written specifically for the Sabbath. It declares the joy of worshipping God and the blessings God pours on us as we worship him. We are promised that we will flourish like palms and cedars when we are planted firmly in the house of the Lord. With a promise like that from God Almighty, who can ever worry or be fearful of anything? See, the work of the Holy Spirit does not just have consequences for us when we die. The work the Holy Spirit does is being done among us right now! That is exactly why we can live so boldly as God's people in the face of any and all calamities. We have the Holy Spirit with us and in us!

The Old Testament is God's promise to plant his Church on the earth and make us grow and prosper. The Gospel is Jesus telling us that our faith is like a mustard seed which starts out as a tiny seed and grows into an amazing plant. In the Collect of the day we ask

God to draw us to his Word which will feed us and make us grow. The hymn of the day says "from sin and sorrow set us free; may we your living temples be." Once you have the theme, you have some framework on which to hang the rest of the worship. In all the parts that you speak, in all the hymns, in all the readings, you can look for the work of the Holy Spirit in creating and nurturing the Church.

Having sung who God is to us, that is the relationship with Him in which the Holy Spirit has placed us, we are now prepared to address the one who is the strength of his people. His priest has entered the Sanctuary on behalf of his people and now comes the Kyrie and the Gloria which we will take up next week.