

The SIXTH SUNDAY of EASTER, 2020
ROGATION SUNDAY
Virtual Grace

Organ Prelude - *“O Jesus crowned with all renown.”* (Hymnal 1982,#292)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Hello and welcome again to “Virtual Grace”
from Grace Episcopal Church in Honesdale, PA,
on this “Rogation Sunday,”
when traditionally the fields would be blessed for planting.
I’m Fr. Ed, the rector of our parish.
When things settle down and we’re able to travel again,
we hope you might visit us in person.

Remember, if you are in any pastoral need at all, call me, 24/7.
No matter the virus, I am ready to come to your spiritual aid.
And if you are able, make your contributions - your offerings of sacrifice -
to the continued ministries of Grace Church.

Come now, and let us bless the Lord.
In the name of God the Creator, ✚ God the Sustainer, God who Sanctifies. Amen.

Here are stanzas from one Rogation hymn, heard at the beginning:

Lord, in their charge, let frost and heat, and winds and dews be giv’n;
all fostering power, all influence sweet, breathe from the bounteous heaven.
Attemper fair with gentle air the sunshine and the rain,
that kindly earth and timely birth may yield her fruits again.

that we may feed the poor aright, and gathering round thy throne,
here, in the holy angels’ sight, repay thee of thine own:
that we may praise thee all our days, and with the Father’s Name,
and with the Holy Spirit’s gifts, the Savior’s love proclaim.

Hymnal 1982, from # 292, “O Jesus crowned with all renown”

CONFESSION

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor:

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your Name. Amen.

May Almighty God in mercy receive our confession of sorrow and of faith,
strengthen us in all goodness, ☩ and by the power of the Holy Spirit, keep us
in eternal life. Amen.

Join with me, as you are able, in offering God praise in The Gloria.

CANTICLE -

Glory to God

BCP p.356

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer.
For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Let us pray:

O God, you have prepared for those who love you such good things as surpass our understanding: Pour into our hearts such love towards you, that we, loving you in all things and above all things, may obtain your promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

PSALM *Benedic, anima mea* *from Psalm 104, Book of Common Prayer, pp. 735-737*

Bless the Lord, O my soul;
 O Lord my God, how excellent is your greatness!
 you are clothed with majesty and splendor.
You send the springs into the valleys;
 they flow between the mountains.
All the beasts of the field drink their fill from them,
 and the wild asses quench their thirst.
Beside them the birds of the air make their nests
 and sing among the branches.
You water the mountains from your dwelling on high;
 the earth is fully satisfied by the fruit of your works.
You make grass grow for flocks and herds
 and plants to serve mankind;
That they may bring forth food from the earth,
 and wine to gladden our hearts,
Oil to make a cheerful countenance,
 and bread to strengthen the heart.
The eyes of all wait upon you, O God,
 and you give them their food in due season.
You open wide your hand,
 and they are filled with good things.
Bless the Lord, O my soul.
 Hallelujah!

GOSPEL READING

Mark 4: 2-8

Jesus began to teach them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them: "Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and it sprang up quickly, since it had no depth of soil. And when the sun rose, it was scorched; and since it had no root, it withered away. Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. 8 Other seed fell into good soil and brought forth grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirty and sixty and a hundredfold."

The Word of God.

MEDITATION

So, have you ever heard of the time in the Church year called Rogationtide?

Probably not.

Unless you, like me, are an Anglo-phile,

or grew up in earlier years in the Church

in the agrarian - the farming - culture of Wayne County.

The days between today and the feast of the Ascension of Christ on Thursday,

these days are observance of Rogation,

when traditionally the country parson would,

with thurifer, crucifer, acolytes and choir would, what they said,

“beat the bounds” of the parish

blessing the fields for the Spring planting.

In the *Book of Occasional Services*, or as we lovingly call it, “The Book of Spells,”

instructs us in the tradition:

The Rogation Days are traditionally observed on the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday before Ascension Day. They may, however, be observed

on other days, depending on local conditions and the convenience of the congregation.

Anciently, the observance consisted of an outdoor procession which culminated in a special celebration of the Eucharist. In more recent centuries, the procession has frequently taken place on a Sunday afternoon, apart from the Eucharist.

Hymns, psalms, Scripture and prayers would be offered
during and at various points through the procession,
reminding the people of God's providence
and invoking blessing on the year's harvest.

“We plow the fields and scatter the good seed on the land,
but it is fed and watered by God's almighty hand.” *Hymnal 1982, #291*

And the hymn repeats after each verse:

“All good things around us are sent from heaven above,
so thank the Lord, O thank the Lord for all God's love.”

But.

How often do good faithful people think in their hearts,
no matter what they say with their lips,
“God will take care of it,”
and do nothing, expecting God to do all the work.

True - all good things around us.

The green hills, the running rivers, dancing deer in a field, or fish in the stream,
flowers coating the roadsides with colors, the birds returning with song,
even that stupid mourning dove that always finds my bedroom window,
every bedroom window, the same mourning dove, I swear, since I was a lad!

God will provide.

Yes.

But.

We need to plow the fields and plant the seed.

God needs us to do our work for the harvest.

Some seed falls on the path,

 some on rocky ground,

 some amongst the thorns,

 other seed in fertile ground.

Mark 4: 4-8

There's a lot of challenge for us these days.

We need to do our work in sowing the seed of God's harvest.

We are called to plow the fields of our community soil, the world's soil,

 and plant good seed of love, peace, joy, hope.

Then we must help God in tending the garden, attentive,

 not allowing the adversary to come in the middle of the night

 and sow weeds amongst the grain.

Our Presiding Bishop speaks often about the Way of Jesus - the Way of Love.

I would join with Bishop Curry and encourage each of us to the Work of Love.

 “Plant a radish, get a radish, not a Brussel sprout.”

The Fantasticks

But plant seeds of love, peace, joy and hope and...

Well, just imagine the harvest in God's glory!

God Almighty, bless us, our work, and your bounty.

AMEN!

The CREED

Let us now profess our communal faith in the words of our Baptismal Covenant with the Apostles' Creed, saying:

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints,

the forgiveness of sins,

the resurrection ☩ of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYERS

BCP Form II, adapted

I ask your prayers for God's people throughout the world; for Justin the Archbishop of Canterbury, Michael our Presiding Bishop and Kevin our Bishop; for the Diocesan staff; and for all ministers and people. I ask your prayers for this parish family, and for all who are isolated from their community of faith.

I ask your prayers for those who govern and hold authority in the nations; that they may be led to govern with equity and justice to benefit the entire human family. Inspire them to discover new ways of overcoming divisions and mistrust. We pray for Donald, the President of the United States, the Congress, Thomas our Governor, and Sarah, mayor of our Borough.

I ask your prayers for those who rejoice this week; for those who celebrate birthdays and anniversaries, especially Hunter, Elektra, Kyle, Marion and Sandi.

I ask your prayers for the poor, for those who are on furlough or have lost their jobs; for the sick, especially Rob; the hungry; the oppressed, and anxious; and those in prison, especially Justin and Mitchell. I ask your prayers for those anticipating death.

I ask your prayers for the departed, especially Anne and Anne; those who have died by violent acts, and those who have succumbed to the complications of COVID-19, especially _____ .

I ask your thanksgiving for families with whom we live and love; thanksgivings for first responders, health-care workers and all who offer of themselves for the betterment of others.

For favorable weather, temperate rains, and fruitful seasons, that there may be food and drink for all your creatures, we pray to you, O God.

For your blessing upon the lands and waters, and all who work upon them to bring forth food and all things needful for your people, we pray to you, O God.

For all who care for the earth, the water, and the air, that the riches of your creation may abound from age to age, we pray to you, O God.

Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy. Sustain and support the anxious, be with those who care for the sick, and lift up all who are brought low; that we may find comfort knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Risen Lord. Amen.

from the Archbishop of Canterbury

Let us now pray together in the words which Christ himself taught us, saying:

Our Father...

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you.

The Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace. Amen.

Organ Postlude -

“Now the green blade riseth”

(Hymnal 1982, #204)

17 May 2020
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