

**ROGATION SUNDAY 2016**  
**SERMON – SAINT JOSEPH PARISH**  
**FATHER CRAIG LOONEY**  
**ST. JAMES 1.22 ST. JOHN 16.23**



Saint James has a lot to say about hearing the words of Scripture...and then putting them to good use. He tells us hearing the Good News must lead to positive action. It's all about our actions...and the freedom to do good works.

The Fifth Sunday after Easter is called Rogation Sunday. The word **rogation** comes from the Latin verb **rogare...to ask**. Rogation Sunday and three Rogation Days were originally about asking God to bless the seeds just planted. Later today we will bless the Saint Francis Garden.

Rogation Sunday is "Asking Sunday"...we are asking God for help. Most of us aren't farmers and don't make our living working the land. We do benefit from farmers' work every time we go to the market...especially when the right amount of rain and sun makes fruits and vegetables plentiful and tasty. So let's start by asking God for the right amount of rain and sunshine.

In the Collect we ask God...the source of everything that is good...who gives us good gifts and perfect presents...to help us not only think the right things...but then to go out and do the right things.

James is adamant we not deceive ourselves into thinking it is enough to just hear what is read at Mass. We must be ready and willing to put what we hear into practice. Failure to do so is like looking at our reflection in a mirror. We might think we really look great. Looks can be deceiving!

The point James is trying to make is no matter how clear the reflection in the mirror...it is only just that...a reflection. Our reflections in the mirror don't tell the whole story. The one we really want to impress with our looks is God. And what he looks at is our hearts.

James goes on to say if we really want to impress God with our actions we will go out and take care of orphaned children and widows to try to relieve their suffering. In its earliest days the Church was largely responsible for making this happen. Monasteries and convents put out the welcome mat and did what they could.

Our duty to help others extends beyond the four walls of this building and is not limited to helping orphans and widows. Our duty to help others extends to anyone who is in need. We can help others even if we think we can't...we can help in more ways than simply writing a check.

Our willingness to help others has to come from our hearts...because we genuinely want to do the right thing...not because we feel guilty over what we have and others don't have...or because we are trying to buy God's favor. The satisfaction comes from knowing we are simply doing the right thing...nothing else is needed.

One woman who gave from her heart was Elizabeth Anne Seton. She was the granddaughter of an Anglican priest. Her mother died when she was three years old and when her father remarried she was rejected by her stepmother.

Elizabeth married William Seton in 1794 when she was 19 and he was 25. Together they cared for his six siblings and had five children of their own. William died of tuberculosis in 1803 at age 34, soon leaving Elizabeth in near poverty. She and her sister, Anne, were taken in by the kindness of her late husband's business partner.

Elizabeth Anne Seton had a tumultuous life but her faith in God never wavered. A widow at 28 she went on to found the Sisters of Charity...dedicated to the care of poor children. Seton Medical Center in Daly City is named after her. Elizabeth died in 1821 from tuberculosis. She became the first native-born American to be canonized in 1975.

Jesus tells us we should not hesitate ask to God for material possessions and for the wisdom to use what we have wisely. We also need to take care of those in need...whatever those needs might be. Saint James' marching orders are to practice what we preach.

Saint Elizabeth Anne Seton did just that even in the face of adversity. She trusted God to give her the help she needed and reached out to help others. We should always be asking God for help and trust him to give us the tools we need to reach out and help others too.

