

## V EASTER 2018

SERMON – SAINT JOSEPH PARISH

FATHER CRAIG LOONEY

ST. JAMES 1.22-27 ST. JOHN 16.23-33

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**DON'T JUST LISTEN TO THE GOOD NEWS...TAKE ACTION!**

This morning's Epistle is Part II of II of James' teaching on the good and perfect gifts God gives us...everything we have comes from God...he want us to use the good and perfect gifts we have wisely. The key word here is USE...don't just listen to the Good News about God's good and perfect gifts...put them into ACTION!

Today is the Fifth and last Sunday after Easter...Rogation Sunday. Today and the next three days are called Rogationtide. They form a kind of Advent Season leading us to the next big events in the life of Jesus and the Church's Liturgies...the Ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

The word **rogation** comes from the Latin verb **rogare...to ask**. We see the word **rogation** in words commonly used today such as **interrogation** and **subrogation**...both having to do with asking for something and obtaining results.

Rogationtide became popular beginning in the 5<sup>th</sup> century and was originally a time for asking God for his blessings on the spring planting and for a bountiful fall harvest. The custom developed in European countries of "beating the bounds"...the clergy and lay people would process to every corner of the Parish and bless the fields. Later this morning we will bless the seeds planted by the children of Creative Learning School and all of the other plants in the Saint Francis Garden.

Rogationtide is connected to Thanksgiving Day when we talk about harvesting crops...and harvesting souls. Before you can harvest crops you have to plant the seeds. The good seeds that are planted in the ground in the spring eventually "die" and are "resurrected" as crops harvested in the fall. Before you can have a harvest of souls you have to plant the Good News...nurture it and watch it grow. We are both planters and souls...Jesus will come back when the time is right according to God's plan...to harvest souls...including us.

Rogationtide is about prayer and prayer is asking God for the spiritual and material blessings we need to turn the good and perfect gifts he gives us into good and perfect works. The Collect eloquently expresses our desire to not only think what is right but to do what is right...starting with prayer. The perfect prayer and a good place to begin any conversation with God is the Lord's Prayer.

When we ask God for material blessings we take on the responsibility of being good stewards of the good and perfect gifts he has given us. We have a duty as mature Christians to share what we have with those who have less. James tells us that it isn't enough for us to just listen to the Good News about Jesus...we must put what we hear into practice...otherwise our faith is a lie.

Our responsibility to reach out to those in need extends beyond the orphans and widows James talks about. Saint Joseph Parish has supported CALL Primrose in Burlingame through monthly food drives and participating in their annual Thanksgiving Fill-a-Box/Feed-a-Family program. We can't stop there...each of us must help others in every way we can with the gifts God has given us. Jesus tells us in Luke's Gospel...those of us who have been given much...will be expected to give much.

Jesus tells us we should not hesitate to ask things of God in his Name...both spiritual and material things. Together they help us do God's work. Jesus wants us to trust God enough to ask him to provide the ordinary things we need to live...food, clothing, health and our homes. Jesus also wants to help us get through those times when our routine and orderly lives go out of sync and become disordered.

Sometimes hearing the Good News and taking action as James says we must is challenging. We live in a world that does seem to be increasingly out of sync and disordered. What do we do...Jesus tells us to be brave and not give up hope...because he has defeated the world.

**WE HAVE HEARD THE GOOD NEWS...IT'S NOW TIME FOR US TO TAKE ACTION!**

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