

V Easter 2020 / Rogation Sunday

Sermon – Saint Joseph Parish

Father Craig Looney

St. James 1.22-27 St. John 16.23-33



What should we be asking God for...in Jesus' Name? Jesus tells us to ask God for anything in his Name...and what we receive from the Father will make our happiness full and complete.

In these uncertain times...asking God to help keep our faith strong...to guide those helping others...to let us experience the true happiness Jesus talks about...and to quickly restore things to normal...should be the first things on our mind in our daily prayers.

Today is the Fifth and last Sunday in the Easter Season. The Book of Common Prayer subtitles today *Rogation Sunday*. The Rogation Days are the three days following. Together they form the short Season leading up to Ascension Day called *Rogationtide*.

The word **rogation** comes from the Latin verb **rogare**...meaning **to ask**. We also see **rogare** in words like **interrogate**...to ask or question systematically; **abrogate**...to ask or propose an end to something; **subrogate**...to substitute a right or claim. All of these **askings** have to do with written or spoken words that are often applied in legal ways.

We ask God for things all the time...asking is a form of prayer. We ask for good health, good weather, healing, spiritual growth and wisdom to know God's love is always with us during these trying times.

Rogationtide is about asking God for his blessings. Beginning in the fifth century, the custom developed in European countries of "beating the bounds"...holding a procession that went to every corner of the parish...asking God to bless the spring planting and for a bountiful harvest in the fall.

Unlike the farmers of the fifth century...most of us don't earn a living by working the land. We take for granted there will always be enough food on the table. But today's farmers face unprecedented challenges and we should include them in our prayers.

Rogationtide is ultimately about prayer and prayer is asking God for both spiritual and material blessings. In the Collect we ask God

to help us not only to think good things but also to do good works. The perfect prayer and a good place to start any conversation with God is the Lord's Prayer.

When we ask God for material blessings we assume the responsibility that comes along with the asking...we must try to be good stewards of the good gifts and perfect presents he blesses us with. Part of what it means to be good stewards is to recognize our responsibility as mature Christians to share what we have with those who are less fortunate.

Today's Epistle picks up where we left off last week...how we respond to hearing God's word. James tells us that it isn't enough just to hear and feel good about the Good News about Jesus...we must put what we hear into action. God's word sets us free to love others.

Christian love means to do what's best for others. Orphans and widows of James' time didn't have social welfare programs to help them. They could easily find themselves living on the streets. Homelessness isn't a new thing. James tells us we have a basic duty to help those in need in whatever way we can. We must do everything we possibly can by sharing the good gifts and perfect presents God has given us with others...providing them with hope.

Jesus wants us to ask the Father for the things we need and to ask for them in his Name. Jesus wants us to trust God enough to ask him to provide the ordinary things we need to live...food, clothing, health, our homes...and to help all of us especially in times like this when our faith is tested.

The world can be a scary place without hope...hope that comes from hearing God's word and taking action...putting into practice what we believe...even when times are tough. Jesus tells us not to give up hope...to be brave...because he has defeated the world. If we do this...we can experience full and complete happiness even during uncertain times.

Let us ask God to help us be brave and help us help others be brave too!

