

## V Easter 2021 / Rogation Sunday

Sermon – Saint Joseph Parish

Father Craig Looney

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



Today is the Fifth and last Sunday in the Easter Season...more commonly called *Rogation Sunday*. The Rogation Days are the three days following. Together they form the short transitional Season leading up to Ascension Day called *Rogationtide*.

The word **rogation** comes from the Latin verb **rogare**...meaning **to ask**. We see **rogare** in words like **interrogate**...to question systematically; **abrogate**...to abolish by legal action or to fail to do what is required; **subrogate**...what our insurance company does on our behalf to recover costs. All of these **askings** have to do with actions often applied in legal ways.

Last year at this time we were asked to consider the following question...what should we be asking God for...in Jesus' Name? We were in the early days of the global pandemic that changed our lives and still challenges us today. The future...was very uncertain?

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. Most of us were asking God to give the medical professionals the wisdom to find a vaccine...and for an end to the pandemic.

God always answers our prayers. There are three possible answers he gives us: yes, no or wait a while. Vaccines became available in record time. While we're still living in *Coronatide*...life has returned to something that looks like normal. Most importantly...we are able to gather as a Parish Community for Mass and fellowship.

*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.

The physical boundaries of Saint Joseph include all of Northern California. We can't realistically "beat those bounds"...it would take us months, or years! Instead, we will

have our own mini-version after Mass today and bless the seeds and plants in the Saint Francis Garden.

*Rogationtide* is ultimately about prayer and prayer is asking God for both spiritual and material blessings. In the Collect we acknowledge God is the source of all good things...meaning everything. We ask him to help us not only 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.

God's spiritual and material blessings...the good gifts and perfect presents Saint James talks about...come with the responsibility to be good stewards of those good gifts and perfect presents. James tells us to control our tongues...we are to tell the truth and not hurt others by telling lies about them or tearing them down.

We also have the responsibility as mature Christians to share what we have with those who are less fortunate. James tells us that it isn't enough just to hear the Good News about Jesus...we must put what we hear into action. God's word sets us perfectly free to love others. Christian love means doing what's best for others, sometimes setting our own needs and wishes aside.

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 us with the ordinary gifts we need to live: food, clothing, health, and our homes. We should also ask for the increase of the Holy Spirit to give us strength when we find our faith tested by the world around us.

We live in a world that seems increasingly hostile to the Church and the Gospel message of peace and love. Hope in hearing God's word and putting it into practice is what keeps us grounded...even when times are tough.

Jesus tells us the world will make us suffer. He also tells us to be brave! He has defeated the world. Let's ask God to help us be brave!

