

V Easter 2023
Sermon – Saint Joseph Parish
Father Craig Looney
St. James 1.22 St. John 16.23



We plow the fields and scatter the good seed on the land...we ask for God's blessings...and we thank him for the seedtime and the harvest.

Good seed...the hymn teaches us...with the right amount of sun and water...blessed by God the Creator of all things as James reminds us...produces a bountiful harvest.

God's good gifts and perfect presents...the seeds planted in our hearts...blessed through our prayers and praises of Him who created us...must produce a rich harvest of good works.

The Fifth Sunday after Easter is called **Rogation Sunday** and with the three days following we are now entering a "transitional" Season called **Rogationtide**. The word **Rogation** comes from the Latin verb **rogare**..."to ask".

Rogationtide is ultimately about prayer. In the Collect we ask God to "inspire" us to think good things and then go out and do good things. This is what our friend, Saint James, calls putting our faith into action. Faith is one of those "seeds" planted in our hearts. Faith is more than a buzzword...more than a thought. Our faith must be dynamic and reach outward.

Rogation Sunday and Rogationtide make more sense when we explore the seed and harvest theme. Seeds get planted in the ground. They get sun and water. But the seeds must ultimately "die". They get "resurrected" as flowers, trees and full-grown plants. Our bodies planted in the ground when we die will be resurrected into new and glorious bodies in heaven.

Later this morning we will gather in our Saint Francis Garden to bless the seeds and saplings planted by Creative Learning School. We will also bless the trees and flowers already growing strong and healthy. The two prayers read during the blessings should help us focus on our own spiritual welfare...asking God to give us help to keep our spiritual lives strong and healthy.

Our faith should lead us into developing a prayer life. Prayer is really conversation with God. We gather together every Sunday to pray in the more formal structured Prayer Book way. We should also make time in our busy lives for God...every day. Having quiet prayer over our morning coffee is no less valid prayer in God's eyes than the Mass or Daily Offices.

In the Gospel, Jesus tells us anything we ask of God our Father he will give us if we ask him in his Name. God wants us to ask him for things. He will provide us with what we need. We may want a \$150,000 Porsche. That might not be in our best interest...just think of the taxes and registration fees!

Jesus tells us we should ask of God so that we may receive from him and so that our happiness will be complete. God wants us to be happy and our real happiness comes from knowing we are doing what is pleasing to him. During the Mass we ask Him for strength, forgiveness, healing, and for his blessing on our parish and on each other. And we thank him for the strength and forgiveness and blessing we have already received.

We have a responsibility to share the many blessings God has given us with others. We hear the Good News about Jesus at Mass. James tells us we must do more...we must do the Good News. When he writes God considers pure and genuine religion is taking care of orphans and widows and to keep our selves from being corrupted by the world, he means doing what's best for everyone.

The seed that was planted in our hearts at our baptisms is the same seed we ask God to increase in our hearts on Pentecost. We ask God that the seed...the Holy Spirit...will help us grow spiritually more and more each day of our lives...so that we will be a mature and fitful harvest when Jesus returns.

Jesus tells us that while we are waiting for him to return we should not become discouraged by what we see happening in the world around us. Jesus tells us to be brave...because he has defeated the world.

Our **Rogationtide** Prayer should be to ask God to help us be brave... just like Jesus was!

