

Sermon :: 03-May-2026
Easter 5 (this year, observing Rogationtide), Year A

“ [You] who believe[] in me will ... do the works that I do[:]
and, in fact, ... *greater* works than these’ ”

We pause ... in fact, make a little *detour* ... this Fifth Sunday of Easter ... to observe—slightly early, this year¹—*Rogation Sunday*: the blink-and-you’ll-miss-it season, during Eastertide, that the Church appoints for giving thanks for all that God has given us, in creation (and, more widely, in our lives) ... and also for *BESEECHing*—a translation of the Latin *ROGARE*, whence we get the (admittedly somewhat peculiar) term *Rogation*—for *BESEECHing* God to continue to prosper our livelihoods and provide for our welfare. In mid-spring, when many of the year’s crops have been planted and now rely upon a generative balance of work and weather ... of tending and timing ... of prayer and providence ... of, in a word, *our effort* and *God’s grace* ... the Church has long commended the faithful to *BESEECH* God for a harvest sufficient to see us through to *next* year.

Now, in our less agriculturally-oriented times ... certainly no less *dependent* upon our farmers and their labors, but surely less *cognizant* of them ... Rogationtide has come to take on a wider, more comprehensive sweep: a lifting up of the entire ecosystem—indeed, a system of innumerable, interdependent *systems*—that God has created and bequeathed us. ¶ We *praise* the *handiwork* of God: its perfect logic ... and its infinite mystery. ¶ We *give thanks* for the *bounty* of God: its overflowing abundance ... and its never-ending adaptability. ¶ And we *BESEECH* the *steadfastness* of God: that its flourishing for uncountable² eons-to-*date* ... may, by God’s grace, continue for uncountable eons-to-*come*.

And ... by tradition ... Rogationtide is *also* a time of both physical and spiritual *fasting*: a time for us to examine our *own* livelihoods ... our *own* priorities and efforts ... our *own, personal* patterns and habits of living and consuming; of giving and taking; of sowing and reaping, as it were. For unlike all the *other* creatures of God’s hand that merely live *in* God’s creation³ ... *we, uniquely*, have the ability to *sustain* it ... and *alter* it; to *add to* it ... and *subtract from* it; to *further* it ... and, alas, *destroy* it. We *humans* ... *alone* among the countless expressions of God’s creativity in this world ... have a God-given *role* to play—a sacred *duty* to honor—not only to foster the *ongoing-ness* ... but also to ensure the *well-being-ness* ... of Christ’s earthly kingdom.⁴ God has given us *responsibility* for ... has made us, with God, *co-authors* of ... the *conservation* and *upkeep*⁵ of this natural world; the *preservation* and the *prospering* of *all* God’s creatures. And we find this *co-creativity*—this *co-creating-ness*—that God shares *with* us and expects *from* us, throughout Scripture:

¹ Rogation Sunday is usually the *Sixth* Sunday of Easter (and the Rogation Days are the three weekdays immediately following (*i.e.*, preceding Ascension Day)), but this year, the calendar wouldn’t quite cooperate with us in our planning!

² Not literally, I suppose, but for long enough as to surpass human imagination.

³ But, you may say, beavers dam rivers ... insects invade new territories ... viruses mutate and kill other creatures. All true, but they do these things according to their ‘divine programming’—the way they were *created*—and not, as we humans do, by *choice*. The ‘harm’ they do by instinct is part of the natural order; the harm we do, willfully, is against it.

⁴ Cf Psalm 115:15-16 (“May you be blessed by the LORD, | the maker of heaven and earth. | The heaven of heavens is the LORD’s, | but he entrusted the earth to its peoples.”).

⁵ I learned a great new word that I wanted to use here: *SUSTENTATION*, which is the “maintenance of life, growth, courage and morale.” But alas, this was not the time to drop a \$100 word!

- Upon the threshold to the Promised Land, Israel hears God say⁶ that God will “look after” the new land, which will produce grain and wine and oil ... and that we are to love and serve the God Who does so: by gathering *in* God’s providence and ensuring that *all* may eat their fill from it
- The writer of First Peter observes that God has, in Christ Resurrected, anointed us a “royal priesthood” ... so that we, servants in the temple of God’s creation, may build upon the foundation of the living Christ *visible, tangible, active, even inspiring* expressions of God’s love and God’s care ... not only in *words* of praise and of prayer ... but also in *deeds* of *stewardship* and of *sacrifice* ... in showing forth the mercy *we* have received, to *all* of God’s creation
- And in today’s gospel reading, we hear something of a ‘*throb*’ ... a *longing* ... in Jesus’ promising us that He is going on ahead of us, to prepare a *place* for us in the Father’s house: For this is Jesus’ deepest-of-heart *desire* ... His longest-of-hope *vision*: our *co-existing* ... *co-habiting* ... *co-living*... *co(m)-muning* ... with God ... and not only *our* doing so... but *all* of God’s creation
 >> *And*, Jesus tells us, after He’s ascended to heaven to prepare our place by His side in Paradise ... *we*, His faithful, are to do *His* works—and works “*even greater*” than those He’s done: *He* is in the *Father*; and *we* are in *Jesus*; and thus, *we* are in *God*. Therefore, Jesus *calls* us ... He *commissions* us ... perhaps He even *BESEECHES* us ... to be *co-authors*—*co-creators*—*with* God, of *this* place that God’s *also* prepared for us and for all: to till the soil of our faith ... sow the seeds of our abilities ... tend the ‘produce’—that is, the consequences—of our choices. *Love* this world and all that it *in* it, Jesus *BESEECHES* us ... just as *I* have loved *you* so *this* world may *sing*, for *all* to hear!, the *divine* harmony ... indeed, the *heavenly* harmony ... of *all* creatures living in oneness with their shared-and-common Creator

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I spoke, a few minutes ago, of BESEECHING being the meaning of Rogationtide’s name ... of how, this time each year, our more-agrarian ancestors BESEECHED God for a fruitful, sustaining harvest and a good return upon all their back-breaking labor.

In *this* miraculous—and, equally, *challenging*—*new* age ... an age when we *comprehend* so much more of the *workings* of God’s creation ... *harness* so much more of its *capacity* to serve our *own* ends ... and *leave* our human footprints pressed so much more *indelibly*—and perhaps *injuriously*—deeply into it ... I invite us to hear, during this so-brief season of Rogationtide, *Christ* BESEECHING us to do *our* part ... play *our* role ... heed *our* calling ... as His hands-and-feet in this world: to hear Him BESEECHING us to *care* ... care *more* ... care *abundantly* ... care even *selflessly* ... not only for our fellow

⁶ Via God’s prophet Moses.

creatures ... but also for the preservation and flourishing of God's creation, as a whole. For if Jesus is BESEECHING us ... how else can we answer, but "We will!"?

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