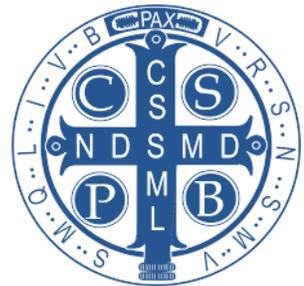




'ORA ET LABORA'

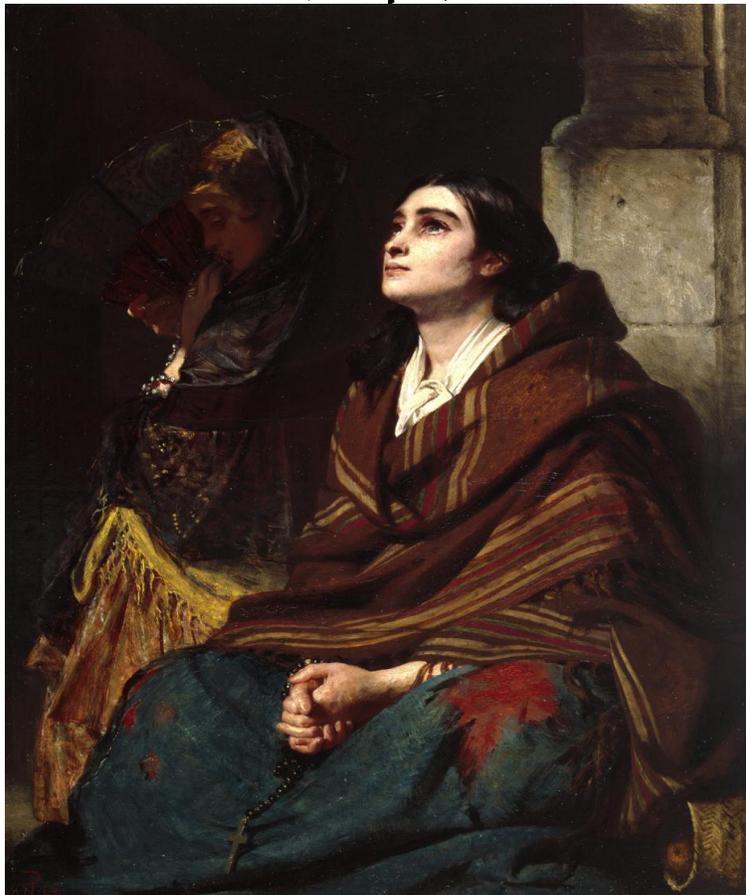


The Meditation

The Fifth Sunday after Easter - Rogation Sunday

A.D. 2016

(May 1st)



Prayer - 1859

Scottish painter; John Phillip (1817 - 1867)

The Collect for the Fifth Sunday after Easter

O Lord, from whom all good things do come ; Grant to us thy humble servants, that by thy holy inspiration we may think those things that are good, and by thy merciful guiding may perform the same ; through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

The fullness of joy.

We hear, in today's Gospel, Christ's recommendation, which is also a promise: "*Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.*" (St. John: Ch.16, Vs.24). How much richer and fuller would our lives be, if we always kept these words in mind! "*Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you*" (Jn: Ch. 16, Vs.23).

Only a few more days separate us from the feast of our Lord's Ascension, the crowning point of his life upon earth, during which time He suffered and saved us. He rose again to give us the pledge of His resurrection and instituted baptism, which makes us children of God. He gave Himself to us in Holy Communion, that He might always remain with us and in us, and promised the Holy Ghost, who was to remind us of all that He taught us. Now, at such a short time before leaving us, we are told clearly how much He wishes that we should have "*joy which may be full.*" Today's Collect prefaces this, and the Gospel declares it is so.

Jesus is not speaking to us about material, but of *spiritual joy*. He, whose gladness is everlasting; the Son of God, King of infinite majesty and glory, thinks of us poor, worthless human beings, and He cares whether we are glad or sorrowful. His will is that we should be happy, and that our joy should be complete. All that Christ did on earth and all that He still does in heaven and in every soul, He does, not for Himself, but that our gladness should be in full measure. Gladness in material things, like life itself is transitory. Christ desires that we transcend this basic level and exchange it for a gladness and joy that will last forever.

Nothing is stronger or more victorious than the joy that is founded in God. When He fills us with His joy, we can help to conquer the world for Him; we can share His love for all mankind. We must, however, be *void of self and full of Him*. Only then can we be truly happy. There will be little or no room for Him as long as we exist being full of self, and we'll always find something to complain about, someone to find fault with, and this will lead to a killing of the joy within ourselves and others. It's an unseen ripple effect that spreads out often beyond our own sight.

Christ, Who from every moment, sacrificed Himself for His Father and for all souls . . . who let His executioners break His precious body as though it were a vase of the most precious perfumed ointment with which to save souls, teaches us what it really means to empty oneself. He forgets *himself* to such an extent that He does not remember His own benefits, and when He bids us to be glad, doesn't add: ' Because I have done so much to make you so.' He says nothing. Such love . . . how can we imitate it?

He sees that there is still pain and misery in our hearts . . . how can there not be, living in such a world as this? He reassures us: "*Ask in my Name and you will receive*" This is a promise made by the Son of Almighty God in the Name of God. If Christ grants us all that we ask, it means that we have a share in His All-power. He lets us dispose of His kingdom and take

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whatever we lack that our joy may be full. Remember, this is the joy of the spirit and not of the earth . . . too often people can't separate the two, and hence, live in disappointment and sadness.

This is not just one time only, but for all the span of our lives. Always fresh gifts, an ever greater measure of gladness, until we finally enter into the joy of our Lord! He does not add; ' if what you ask is good for you' He knows that whatever we ask in His Name will be for our good, since He Who lives in us inspires all our wishes. Even material things can give spiritual joy, because when they are sent by Him they are proof that He Who sent them loves us.

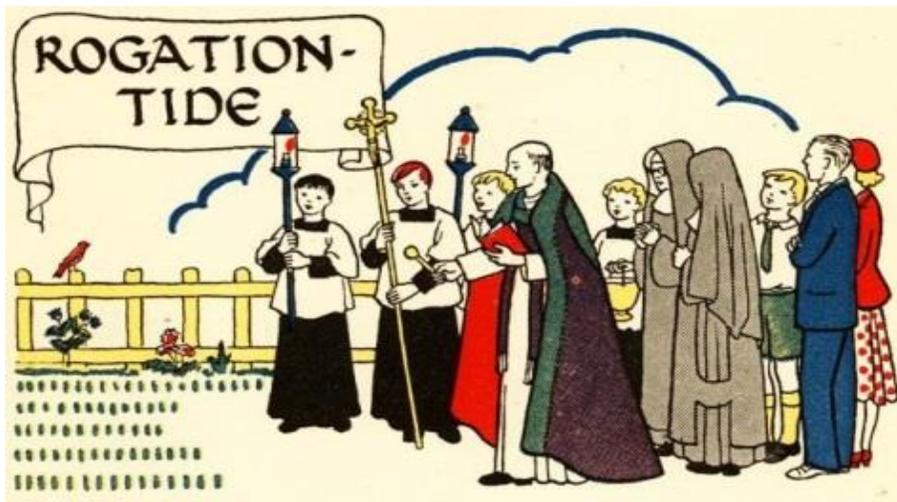
We are entering the time of **Rogation tide** starting today. These are the "days of prayer", although all of our days should be **Rogations**. What are we to ask Him, Who in His love promises to grant all our requests? First of all, we are bidden to ask: "*Hallowed by thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as in heaven.*"

We ask for His kingdom within us and outwardly. Within us that we may break with whatever is an obstacle to His life in us: sin, lethargy, unruly and worthless attachments, selfishness, pride, and self-love. Outwardly is the expansion of Holy Church, the unity of all Christians, the return of all who are in error, the conversion of sinners and unbelievers, the growth of Vocations in the clergy and religious orders, and the sanctification of all God's children.

How much our Blessed Lord Jesus has done for us – it's infinite! And yet, He wishes us to go on praying ("*pray without ceasing*"), that our gladness may be in full measure.

We could ask Him a thousand things, which would make our lives richer and happier, but everything is comprised in the prayer that He taught us "*Pater Noster qui es in coelis... Our Father, who art in heaven...*" Let us say it with our whole hearts, let us pray it with loving hearts! He allows us to add our own personal desires, and therefore, we ought to pray, *dwell in us, live in us, purify us, teach us, and make us your humble servants as you see fit to do. If He lives in us, our joy must be full; if He works in us, our work must be fruitful. Love us, and set our hearts on fire with love You, O Lord; then love for our brethren will naturally follow.*

This Rogation Day, our prayer can be a simple, yet heartfelt one: "*O God, my Father, I ask thee this greatest of all joys in the Name of your Son, Jesus Christ, my Lord, my Savior and my eternal joy! Amen.*"



From the Fathers of the Church

St. John Chrysostom – on Prayer

St. John offers us some profound and practical words about prayer that dovetail very well with the Mass Propers and lections on this Rogation Day. To incorporate these thoughts into our own prayer lives would enhance our divine conversations greatly.

Some extracts from St. John's famous homily on Prayer:

“He will sometimes grant what we ask and sometimes not ; in both cases to our advantage. For whether you receive an answer or not, you have received in not receiving; and whether you succeed or not, you have succeeded in not succeeding in that which you sought. For many times it is more profitable for you not to obtain what you have prayed for. Indeed, unless that which we ask for is profitable for us, it will certainly not be granted to us, so that it is equally a gain to obtain our request and not to obtain it.”

“Often God will delay, not because he is denying our prayer, but in his wisdom seeking for our perseverance and desiring to draw us even nearer to himself; as a loving Father when asked by his son for something will often do ; withholding consent, not from the wish to refuse, but to encourage him in steadfastness.”

“That our prayers should be heard they must first come from one who is worthy to be heard; secondly, they should be made in accordance with the laws of God. Thirdly, they should be unceasing. Fourthly, it is demanded of us that we pray with earnestness, and not in a worldly manner. Fifthly, that we join with him in bringing them about by asking only for what is fitting and expedient for us.”

“Many people go to church and there they recite endless prayers, then they go out again and do not know a word of what they have said. Their lips moved, but the sense of hearing, even their minds, did not perceive anything. You who cannot hear your own prayers wish that God will! . . . Your lips recited prayers, but your attention was taken up with profit and loss, with business, with exchange, with friends.”

“It cannot be, no never can it be, that a man who prays as he ought, calling on God without ceasing, shall ever fall away! Who rouses his mind and heart, lifting himself in spirit up to heaven and thus calling upon the Lord; who mindful of his sins, pleads with him to forgive them, begging that he be gracious and merciful.”

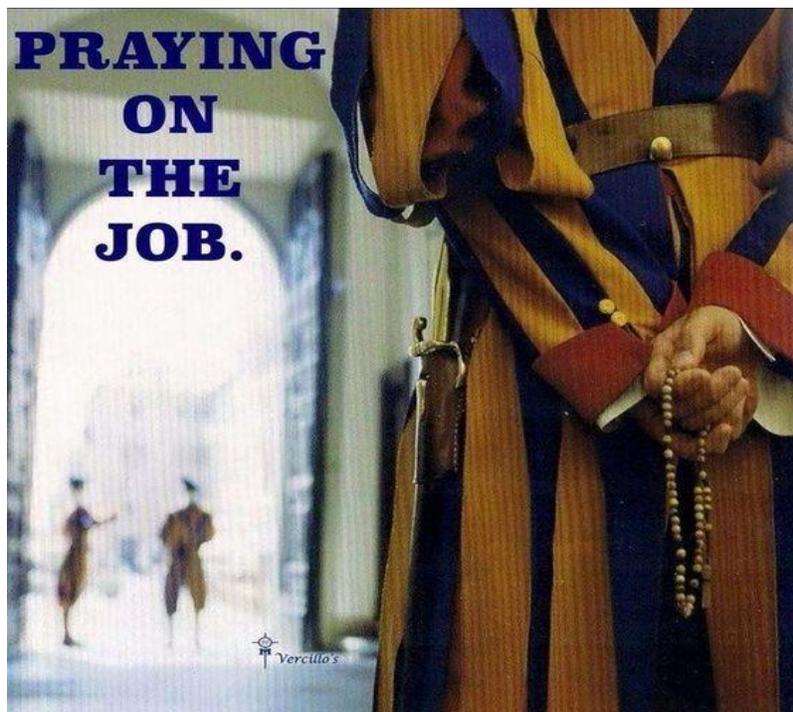
“He who prays should not try after long prayers, but should pray often; for both Christ and St. Paul teach us to make use very frequently of short prayers, repeated frequently at intervals. Should you pray at great length it will often happen that you open yourself to attacks of the devil,

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giving him ready access to your mind to distract you and upset you, leading you away from what you are saying but if you give yourself to short, frequent prayer, dividing up the time of prayer discreetly, you will easily retain control of your mind, while making such prayer with greater recollection.”

“ Nor is there much need for the voice as for the mind; nor for a stretching forth of the hands so much as a striving of the soul; nor for the outward sign so much as the inward reality. It was because of this that the prayer of Anna, mother of Samuel, was readily heard. Not because she cried out to God with a clear voice, but because she did so from the heart . . . Let us then not make excuses, saying that it is difficult to pray in the midst of worldly affairs, or that there is no church near at hand. For wherever you are you can set up your own altar. No place forbids it and no time prevents it. Though you do not bend the knee, nor beat the breast, nor raise your hands to heaven, if you will but make known to God your ardent faith you have offered perfect prayer. For it is possible as you go through the market place or walk alone to make frequent prayer. It is possible, while sitting in your workshop stitching leather, to offer your heart to God. It is possible for the man who is selling and for him who is buying, for the one going up and the one coming down, for the person standing over the pot cooking, to make frequent and fervent prayer.”

St. John Chrysostom: 4th century Bishop of Constantinople and Doctor of the Church



The Meditation is an online apostolate of Our **Lady of Seven Sorrows Priory** in Raymond, Maine. We are an Anglo-Catholic Benedictine contemplative community that follows the Holy Rule of St. Benedict, the Fifth-century Father of Western monasticism. We are affiliated within the Diocese of the Northeast (DNE), of the Anglican Church in America (ACA), a member of the worldwide Traditional Anglican Communion (TAC).

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In respect to our contemplative vocation and the animals in our rescue and rehab center, we do not have guest facilities and do not receive visitors during the Winter months.



Fig. 18.—Ploughmen.—Fac-simile of a Miniature in a very ancient Anglo-Saxon Manuscript published by Shaw, with legend “God Spede ye Plough, and send us Korne enow.”

Priory Kalendar

For the week of :

May 1st to May 8th - A.D. 2016

Easter tide & Ascension tide

Sunday, May 1st 5th Sunday after Easter – Rogation Sunday

Monday, May 2nd . . . St. Athanasius; B.C.D. 4th cent. comm. Rogation Monday

Tuesday, May 3rd . . . Finding of the Holy Cross comm. Rogation Tuesday

Wednesday, May 4th . . . St. Monica: W. & Mother of St. Augustine of Hippo, 5th cent. Carthage

Thursday, May 5th . . . ASCENSION DAY – (a Day of Obligation) comm. St. Augustine, B.C.D.

Friday, May 6th . . Sts. Philip & James: App. & Myrs. 1st cent. – In the Octave of the Ascension

Saturday, May 7th . . . St. Stanislaus; B. & Myr 11th cent. - In the Oct. of the Ascension.

Sunday, May 8th Sunday after the Ascension of our Lord

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Animal News from the Priors

The unexpected amount of snow this week (4") came as a surprise to all of the outdoor animals, many of whom are building their nests in our small but always welcoming barn. The birds spent the day stealing grain from the sheep and horses rather than go outside in the storm. The barn animals, as always were happy to share. Our friends, the Shakers remarked that it never fails that the day after they shear their sheep the cold weather returns. Our sheep are sheared before theirs by the same shearer, and we had to agree laughingly, at the irony of having your winter coat taken off and then getting snow.

- Sr. Mary Francis



