

Prayers and Readings for Rogation Sunday 17th May 2020

The Rogation Days (from the Latin *rogare*, 'to ask') are the three weekdays before Ascension Day. However, in practice, many churches have observed Rogation on the preceding Sunday (Easter V in the Prayer Book, the Sixth Sunday of Easter in Common Worship).

The Prayer Book Gospel includes the words of Jesus, 'Whatsoever ye shall ask for in my Name, he will give it you' – words associated with the heavenly intercession of the ascended Christ.

Originally, the Christian observance of Rogation was taken over from Graeco-Roman religion, where an annual procession invoked divine favour to protect crops against mildew. The tradition grew of using processional litanies, often around the parish boundaries, for the blessing of the land. The Rogation procession was suppressed at the Reformation, but it was restored in 1559. The poet and priest George Herbert interpreted the procession as a means of asking for God's blessing on the land, of preserving boundaries, of encouraging fellowship between neighbours with the reconciling of differences, and of charitable giving to the poor.

The tradition of 'beating the bounds' has been preserved in some communities, while others maintain the traditional use of the Litany within worship. In more recent times, the scope of Rogation has been widened to include petition for the world of work and for accountable stewardship, and prayer for local communities, whether rural or urban.¹

At this time of lockdown as we all deal with the threat of the Coronavirus, it is vital we turn to God in prayer as individuals and as His Church. Of course, this year, we cannot have processions or join together for worship but we can still pray for the land, our nation and the well-being of Creation. Please feel free to use the prayers and readings below in any way that helps you pray for your community, parish, the nation and our world.

Perhaps you can walk around your garden briefly pausing as you read the Scriptures and pray for various aspects of creation. You could pray through the service before your daily walk and then recall parts of it as you pass various places. If you are self-isolating or not very mobile, you can pray from your chair, imagining different parts of the world in your mind's eye. The most important thing is to be open to God's Spirit and pray for our world.

¹ Times and Seasons, p. 597

Worship for Rogation Sunday

This act of worship can be undertaken on your allotted daily walk, in your garden or from your chair. Just pick each section as appropriate. It does not matter which order you do things in as long as you end with the intercessions and blessing. If you want to add something or leave something out, feel free.

The Greeting

Alleluia! Christ is risen.
He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Opening Prayer

We come before you our God and Sustainer,
remembering that you are our Creator
and the source of all being.
Out of your love the universe was born.
From primordial darkness you put in place
all that is needed for growth
and saw that it was good.
You have put this world into our hands:
may we recognise your Spirit within it,
disturbing and challenging us to care for creation,
for the weak and the deprived.
Lord we remember that we are called by you
to nourish the earth and its diversity of life,
to share the gifts you have given, with one another
and with the poor of the world. **Amen**

Prayers of Penitence

Let us ask God to have mercy on our tired land,
and to prosper the work of our soiled hands.
Let us ask God to forgive our delusion of self-sufficiency
so that we may praise him for his provision and goodness.

Lord, you give us this good earth,
yet we take your generous gifts for granted.
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Lord, you give us this good earth,
but we squander its rich resources.
Christ, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

Lord, you give us this good earth,
but we fail to share your bounty
with all of your children.
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

May the God of love and power
forgive us and free us from your sins,
heal and strengthen us by his Spirit,
and raise us to new life in Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Collect

Almighty God,
whose will it is that the earth and the sea
should bear fruit in due season:
bless the labours
of those who work on land and sea,
grant us a good harvest
and the grace always to rejoice in your fatherly care;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Psalm 23

1 The Lord is my shepherd;
therefore can I lack nothing.
2 He makes me lie down in green pastures
and leads me beside still waters.
3 He shall refresh my soul
and guide me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
4 Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil;
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
5 You spread a table before me
in the presence of those who trouble me;
you have anointed my head with oil

and my cup shall be full.

6 Surely goodness and loving mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Section A Water

If you come across a stream, the sea, a garden pond or even a fire hydrant, pause and reflect on the gift of water

John 7:37-38 may be read

On the last day of the festival, the great day, while Jesus was standing there, he cried out, 'Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, "Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water."' "

Prayer

Almighty God, we thank you for the gift of water to sustain,
refresh and cleanse all life.

May we who have an abundance of water see it as a precious and scarce resource.
Help us to be mindful how much is consumed so that we can live in the way that we do:

guide us to use it sparingly,
and keep us mindful of those who suffer through drought, pollution and flood.

We ask this for the sake of him through whom all things were made,
your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Section B – Crops or Garden

If you come across a garden, some fields or any plants, pause and reflect.

Mark 4:26-29

Jesus also said, 'The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come.'

Prayer

Almighty God, whose will it is that the earth and sea should
bear fruit in due season, bless the labours of all those who
work on land and sea. Grant us a good harvest and the grace
always to rejoice in your care.

Lord you have ordered our life that we are dependent on one another prosper those engaged in commerce direct our minds and hands in the service of you and all with whom we live and work. Grant O Lord that whatever gifts we have, they may be used to the full, for the enrichment of our lives together and for the coming of your kingdom.

We pray in the name of Jesus, the good shepherd. **Amen.**

Section C Overlooking the Downs or any patch of countryside

As you look at the beauty of God's world, celebrate the wonders of creation

Psalm 50:1-2, 10-11

The Almighty God, the LORD, speaks;
he calls to the whole earth from east to west.
God shines from Zion,
the city perfect in its beauty.

All the animals in the forest are mine
and the cattle on thousands of hills.
All the wild birds are mine
and all living things in the fields.

Prayer

Creator God, Jesus teaches us through the beauty and abundance of creation to put our trust in you for all things. We ask you now to bless our fields and gardens our hills and streams our rivers, lakes, reservoirs and seas that in all these things we might glimpse a reflection of your glory and your gracious love for each one of us. Bless, O Lord, the houses and farms and all the homes in this place. Give us good health, purity of spirit, strength and humility, hospitality, a spirit of forgiveness and firm knowledge of our need to seek you in all things. We pray in the name of Jesus, creative Word of God. **Amen.**

Section C For the community overlooking the village, town or city

John 15:1-9

'I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from

me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love.

Prayer

God our father, we give thanks for the gift of your son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who was content to share the life of his village in Nazareth.

We ask you to bless the life of this *town* and the whole parish. We pray for all who live in this place, for all who work here, for all who regard this place as home (wherever they may now live) and for all who simply pass through. May your blessing rest upon us all as we live together in your peace.

We pray in the name of Jesus our peace.

Amen.

Section D A doctor's surgery, pharmacy, care home or hospital

Mark 6.53-56

When they had crossed over, Jesus and his disciples came to land at Gennesaret and moored the boat. When they got out of the boat, people at once recognized him, and rushed about that whole region and began to bring the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. And wherever he went, into villages or cities or farms, they laid the sick in the market-places, and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed.

Prayer

Gracious God,
give skill, sympathy and resilience
to all who are caring for the sick,
and your wisdom to those searching for a cure.
Strengthen them with your Spirit,
that through their work many will be restored to health;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Section E Intercessions

Let us pray to God,
who alone makes us dwell in safety:

Upon the rich earth send a blessing, O Lord.

Let the earth be fruitful
and its resources be hallowed.
Lord, hear us,
Lord, graciously hear us.

Upon human labour send a blessing, O Lord.
Prosper the work of our hands;
may all find dignity and just reward in their work;
free the exploited and oppressed.
Lord, hear us,
Lord, graciously hear us.

Upon the produce of the earth send a blessing,
O Lord.
Guide into a sustainable future,
and give us the will to share the fruits of the world.
Lord, hear us,
Lord, graciously hear us.

Upon the seas and waters send a blessing,
O Lord.
Teach us to cherish the water of the earth,
and to conserve the seas, lakes and rivers.
Lord, hear us,
Lord, graciously hear us.

Upon aid agencies send a blessing, O Lord.
Where the earth is parched
and the well has run dry;
where war brings want, and children go hungry;
where the poor cry out for bread and for justice,
give hands to care and heal,
and compel us to be generous.
Lord, hear us,
Lord, graciously hear us.

For all who are affected by coronavirus,
through illness or isolation or anxiety,
that they may find relief and recovery:
Lord, hear us,
Lord, graciously hear us.

For those who are guiding our nation at this time,
and shaping national policies,
that they may make wise decisions:

Lord, hear us,
Lord, graciously hear us.

For doctors, nurses and medical researchers,
that through their skill and insights
many will be restored to health:
Lord, hear us,
Lord, graciously hear us.

For the vulnerable and the fearful,
for the gravely ill and the dying,
that they may know your comfort and peace:
Lord, hear us,
Lord, graciously hear us.

We commend ourselves, and all for whom we pray,
to the mercy and protection of God.
Merciful Father,
**accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

or

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.**

**Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.**

A General Thanksgiving

Almighty God, Father of all mercies,
we your unworthy servants give you most humble and hearty thanks
for all your goodness and loving kindness.
We bless you for our creation, preservation,
and all the blessings of this life;
but above all for your immeasurable love
in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ,
for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.
And give us, we pray, such a sense of all your mercies
that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful,
and that we show forth your praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives,
by giving up ourselves to your service,
and by walking before you in holiness and righteousness all our days;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,
be all honour and glory, for ever and ever. **Amen.**
adapted from The Book of Common Prayer

Blessing and Dismissal

God the Father, who created the world,
give you grace to be wise stewards of his creation.
Amen.

God the Son, who redeemed the world,
inspire you to go out as labourers into his harvest.
Amen.

God the Holy Spirit,
whose breath fills the whole of creation,
help you to bear his fruits of love, joy and peace.
Amen.

And the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be upon us, and remain with us always.

Amen.

Acknowledgments

The Revd. Nicky Carnall as this liturgy is based on her original work.

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And LWPT (The leaders' of Worship and Preachers' Trust).

Bible passages are from The New Revised Standard Version, Anglicised Edition.