

Saint Thomas and Saint Thomas of the Air Church
 Rogation Sunday
 Fifth Sunday after Easter
 May 25, 2025

rmcneely+

Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my Name
 He will give it you.
 . . . ask and ye shall receive
 that your joy may be full.

The Prayer Book tells us that today is the Fifth Sunday after Easter
 But it also tells us that the day is Commonly known as
 ‘Rogation Sunday’.

In fact, today and the next three days are known as the
 Rogation Days.

They are a special time in the Church.

Not only are then an occasion to contemplate
 The subsequent day; the Ascension of Our Lord,
 Which we commemorate on Thursday,
 But it is a time of prayer.

“Rogation” is one of those old words that we no longer use.
 It is from the Latin: *rogare* meaning: to ask.

You will encounter the root Latin word still lingering
 In the English words such as: *interrogate*, *interrogatory*,

These days of asking are well supported by the Gospel for the Day.

On the Third, Fourth and now the Fifth Sundays after Easter
 The Church has taken us back to the Last Supper and Jesus’

Farewell address; His Last Discourse

It will do so again on the next two Sundays.

So by the time we begin the long Trinity Season
 we will have spent 5 weeks in that Upper Room
 The Last Supper
 The night in which He was betrayed,
 And listened to His Final Discourse.

The thought for the day
 From the Final Discourse is “asking”: Prayer.
 Jesus assured the Apostles and He assures us that
 When we ask of the Father in His Name
 He will give it.

Our English ancestors didn't leave their religion at church
 They lived their beliefs every day
 In what they did and what they said
 In the names they gave places
 In their customs
 Their meals
 Their music and culture.

Theirs was an arduous life
 Grounded in the agriculture of the day.
 They were completely dependent upon the yield
 From the fields around them;
 Those verdant green and pleasant pastures.
 When the fields could not yield their increase
 When drought, hail, flood
 Or disease or pestilence
 Reduced the crops
 When the animals
 And the people did not have enough to sustain them
 They were hungered and some even died.

So when Jesus spoke to them about asking in the Gospel selected
 for the Fifth Sunday after Easter,
 Near the end of Spring
 and the beginning of the Summer growing season
 There was but one thing to ask; to pray for.
 The abundance of their fields.
 That would sustain them.

There grew up a custom that some few still practice to this day;
 The 'Beating of the Bounds,' they called it.

The local priest would lead a procession of the people
 Along the boundaries of what they called the Parish.
 Boundaries that we would recognize as the City Limits
 Or the County line.

As he walked along, the Priest would bless the fields
 And they would pray, ask for,
 The bounty of the fields that would mean their very lives.

So, for centuries Anglicans have blessed and prayed for the land.
 Our Earth Day friends might be surprised to learn
 They follow an ancient Christian tradition.

On Rogation Sunday decades ago, Archbishop Morse, stood right
 here in this very church and said this:

“the church proclaims the goodness of earthly things
 and that Our Lord lifts this world up
 transfigured
 beyond time into Heaven.
 Christians do not separate the love of life
 From the love of God.
 They are one in the same.
 To sense the sacred on Earth is to love God
 Not only in nature
 But God in man as well.”

We re-visit that Last Night
 The night of the Last Supper
 For the answer to our needs:
 Asking in Prayer.

So let's spend these remaining minutes
 Contemplating Prayer;
 Our mystical connection to God.

One of you once told me a story about a man
 Who was almost late for the Easter Service at St Thomas'.
 He was frantically looking for a place to park his car.
 He roared around the neighborhood
 But after 20 minutes he could find nothing.
 In desperation he uttered a prayer:
 Lord if you give me a place to park
 I'll come to church every Sunday for the rest of my life.
 Just then, a car pulled out from a space right in front.
 The man quickly said; "never mind God. I found one."
 Maybe not the most meaningful way to pray.

First, let's consider some simple mechanics:
 I don't know that there is a right way
 and a wrong way to pray
 but there are some things that seem to help.

Be somewhere where you will not be interrupted,
 someplace quiet,
 out of cell phone range,
 and where you can concentrate very well.

Try quieting your mind.
 In order to pray,
 we need to have a state of mind
 that allows us to completely focus,
 and in the words of the psalm;
 to be still and know that he is God.

I don't know which came first,
 but the Christian or the Buddhist tradition
 of slow deep breathing
 works well for some people
 to eliminate as much external stimulation as possible,

Kneeling is never required.
But it can be a great help.
Kneeling is the most humble of gestures.
It is difficult to kneel and to be boastful.
Kneeling also quiets our bodies.
It minimizes nervous or extraneous motion
and helps focus the mind.
Try it.

God loves each of us in a unique and personal way.
It is mysterious in its intimacy and power.
A way that is so personal
That it is difficult for us to describe.
But it is that love,
that intimate connection
that enables us to pray.

There is an intimacy in prayer
that is only between each of us and God.
We must exercise the discretion of love
to protect the intimacy.

He lives in you and you in Him.
You are already joined with Him.
So we pray just as Jesus did:
In the firm knowledge that God loves us
and with bold confidence.

We must pray from the heart.
In absolute honesty,
Holding nothing back.
We must pray from the point of view that
Our prayers are an open line to God's presence
An open line in the time of need.
Pray in the knowledge that he is more eager to meet us in prayer

Than we are with Him.
 And that prayer is one on one time with God
 Who made you
 Who knows you
 And who loves you so much

Next, let's consider the composition of your prayer.

Some people stumble over the words.

There are no rules.

No, that's wrong.

There is only one caveat:

Jesus told us in today's Gospel to pray "in His Name".

So our prayers are in Him

Or maybe through Him is a better way to think if it.

The Holy Spirit is in each of us

He stands at your shoulder and

will quietly guide you

And give you strength.

Just as some people get writer's block

When they look at the blank page in front of them,

We can have trouble with the words of beginning.

Some people find the solution by addressing your prayer

Just like you would a letter:

Dearest Lord

Heavenly Father

Almighty God

Any of the ones from the Book of Common Prayer.

You have begun.

Then just have a conversation

In your words

Talk with God

Just like you would a best friend

Because that is exactly who you are talking with

A simple prayer from the heart.
 Let go your fears and worries
 Let go your stress
 And ask His help
 Guidance
 Assistance
 Support
 Love

Don't let the words get in the way.

If for example:

your prayers are for a friend who is in need.
 You might picture your friend in your mind
 and hold your friend up to God
 and pray for relief.

We cannot know God's will for the friend
 and as Archbishop Provenca told us,
 if you want to give God a good laugh,
 suggest to Him how to provide the relief
 you think your friend needs.

Your prayer is for the relief your friend needs:
 We must leave the how and the when to God.

Similarly, we pray for our own needs;
 when we have done all
 but cannot improve our situation,
 our prayer must be for guidance
 not for a specific solution.
 It is presumptuous to assume we know the will of God
 and can dictate the solution.

The Holy Communion is another way to offer our personal prayers.
 There are a number of pauses
 intentionally built into the service.
 We can use them for our personal prayers.

focus on those things in which we seek God's help and
 figuratively place them on the altar
 or in the chalice to be given to God.
 The Communion service is a time of close union with God.
 That is the very meaning of the word,
 communion—that close union with God.
 Leave it in God's hands at the communion
 and visualize it on the altar
 as part of your oblation
 your participation with Him,
 your sacrifice.

Your prayer is a time of thanks giving.
 One of my very favorite Christians
 Begins every morning,
 The first thought in her head
 With thanks to God
 For another day
 If the day brings one of those spectacular Bay Area sunrises or
 sunsets
 Thank God for that.
 If you should see some act of kindness
 Thank Him for the experience.
 If your life is blessed with friends or family
 Children
 Grand children
 Nieces and nephews
 Thank Him
 If your life has been improved by some event or person, thank
 Him.
 It is good for your soul
 And a fitting way to recognize His hand in your life.

Cultivate intimacy with God
Then, most importantly
Listen
And watch.

For that which we cannot of ourselves achieve
We kneel in prayer and in the Name of Jesus
We seek the Father.
Just as He told the Apostles that night
and today tells us
and we ask His help and guidance.

So, in these Rogation days
Over the next 4 days in particular,
Rogare: Ask.

