

1st Reading: Acts 17:22-31

Psalm: 66:7-18

NT: 1 Peter 3:13-22

Gospel: John: 14:5-21

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart
always be acceptable in thy sight, O' Lord my strength and my
redeemer. Amen.

Today is Rogation Sunday as well as the 6th Sunday after
Easter. If you are under 50 yrs old or have always lived in a city you
may not have heard of this church holiday. Originally, this was a
pagan celebration that was brought into the faith. It is used to
celebrate the coming of spring and prayer for all equipment,
implements, and the land that is used for growing things plus the stock
and the people who do the work. I remember growing up that several
of the local farmers would bring their tractors and wagons to be
blessed.

After the services, the congregation would climb onto the hay
wagons and we would have a hayride around to the various farms to
continue with the blessings. Of course, at one of the farms there
would be a big potluck picnic. This helped us to remember how
closely we were tied to the land and God's blessings for another good

year. It also recognized the conservation of our natural resources that God had provided.

The Gospel today comes from the e book of John. When you study John you find out that this gospel is different from the other three (ie Matthew, Mark, and Luke.) It omits many things that they include. There is no account of the birth of Jesus, his Baptism, or the Last Supper to name a few. Also, there are no parables and none of the stories which Jesus told. What John does give us is information which was omitted in the other Gospels. John was written after the other three gospels and their content was fairly well known throughout the Christian world.

John was also writing to a Christian world that was no longer predominately Jewish. John used vivid language and examples that the Gentiles (primarily of Hellenistic background) could understand and resonated with the times; approximately 100 AD.

In today's reading Christ's Crucifixion is in the near future. He is instructing some of the disciples He is explaining that “those who love Me will keep my word and that the Father will also love them and that We will come to them and make our home with them. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words are not rejecting my words, but the words of the Father who sent Me. I am telling you

this now while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit who the Father will send in My name, will teach you everything , and remind you of all that I have said to you.” This is the first and foremost thing with John. I all starts and ends with Love. The response to love is obedience and that is the only proof of love.

For with obedience comes security in a crashing world and fuller and fuller revelation. The evil man can never receive the revelation of God, he can only be used by God. Now this tells us how important this all is and that to ensure that we are not alone in this struggle we have the Holy Spirit with us. In closing, Christ says “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not let them be afraid. You heard me say to you “I am going away, and I am coming to you.” If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you this before it occurs, so that when it does occur , you may believe.” Now this is a tall order and was hard for the disciples to understand; just as it is hard for us to understand. To put it in perspective. The truth of the Christian faith, we would always be glad when those whom we love go to be with God.

That is not to say that we would not feel the sting of sorrow and the sharpness of loss; but it is to say that even in our sorrow and our loneliness, we would be glad that after the troubles and the trials of this life those whom we love have gone to be with God. For they have entered not into death, but into blessedness.

Another way to express what John was trying to say is contained in today's collect. "O'God, you have prepared for those who love you such good things as surpass our understanding. Pour into our hearts such love towards you that we, loving you in all things and above all things, may obtain your promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ our Lord who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen" Again we are talking about Love. Both God's love for us and our love for him and for each other. The secret of Love is God's Grace. For it is by God's Grace that we are saved.

Once we have achieved this by asking God to be our Savior we then are enabled to do the works that are part of our fulfilling of the obedience which we find that we must do. For as Jesus said: "Love God and love your neighbor as yourself." This mantra and way of life is awaiting you if you have not already asked God to be present in

your life. He awaits you!

Or as a wise priest taught me may we always remember who we are
and whose we are. Amen.