

THE CROSS AND THE PLOW

The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens. By his knowledge the depths are broken up and the clouds drop down the dew.
--Proverbs III: 19-20.

While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter and day and night shall not cease.
--Genesis VIII: 22.

O Lord, open thou our lips
Answer. And our mouth shall show forth thy praise.

HYMN: 360

Dearly beloved, we learn from the Scriptures that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth and caused the sun to shine and the rain to fall, the plants to grow and the earth to give forth her increase. He is the giver of life in the seed, in the soil, and in the sowers. Then God said, let us make man in our image and let him have dominion over everything upon the earth.

We are now assembled to ask God's blessing on the seed that has been planted, the soil that has been cultivated, and the sowers that labor to the service of God and for the good of mankind.

Hear the words of the Lord as proclaimed through the Prophet Ezekiel in the twenty-fourth chapter beginning at the twenty-fifth verse:

I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods. And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing. And the tree of the field shall yield her fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase, and they shall be safe in their land, and shall know that I am the Lord, when I have broken the bands of their yoke, and delivered them out of the hand of those who served themselves of them. And they shall no more be a prey to the heathen, neither shall the beast of the land devour them; but they shall dwell safely, and none shall make them afraid. And I will raise up for them a plant of renown, and they shall be no more consumed with hunger in the land, neither bear the shame of the heathen any more. Thus shall they know that I the Lord their God am with them, and that they, even the house of Israel, are my people, saith the Lord God. And ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, are men, and I am your God, saith the Lord God.

Let us go forth in peace.
Answer: In the name of the Lord. Amen.

HYMN: 308

Answer: From God comes every good and perfect gift;
From God comes every good and perfect gift.

Answer: The rich soil, the smell of the fresh-turned earth;
Come from God.

Answer: The keenness of the winter's frost, men's breath, and horses,
steaming;
Come from God.

Answer: The clatter of the tractor, the gleam of a cutting edge;
Come from God.

Answer: The wheeling of the birds, men's shouts and laughter;
Come from God.

Answer: The seamed hand, the knotted arm, the sweat of the brow, the
skill of the plowman;
Come from God.

Answer: The beauty of a clean-cut furrow, the sweep of a well-plowed
field;
Come from God.

Answer: Blessed be God in all his gifts.
And holy in all his works.

Let us pray;
(Rogation Day)

Almighty God, Lord of heaven and earth: We beseech thee to
pour forth thy blessing upon this land, and to give us a fruitful
season; that we constantly receiving thy bounty may evermore give
thanks unto thee in thy holy church; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

O HEAVENLY Father, who has filled the world with beauty, open we
beseech thee, our eyes to behold thy gracious hand in all thy works that
rejoicing in all creation we may learn to serve thee with gladness; for
the sake of thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

O GOD, who hast entrusted the soil to our keeping, help us to
render to thee a good account of our stewardship; that as we keep our
land in good heart, so we may ourselves be rich in Christian living;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

BLESSED Lord who hast given us the earth to live on, warmed by
the sun, made wet by the rain, having fields and gardens and orchards;
Help us to use the good things fairly, and with kindness one toward
another, working for each other and living for thee. Glory be to thee,
O Lord.
Amen.

May God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit bless the pastures and meadows, all growing grass and green fields. May the soil be wholesome and the crops good. May the weather be favorable and the workers in good heart. And may he that giveth beath and life to the sower, multiply the seed sown and increase the fruits of our righteousness.

Amen.

HYMN: 598

HEAR the words of our Lord as written in the thirteenth chapter of the Gospel according to St. Matthew, beginning at the third verse:

BEHOLD, a sower went forth to sow his seed. As he was sowing some of the seed fell by the path and was trodden on, and the wild birds ate it up. And some of it fell upon the rock and when it sprang up, it withered, because it had no moisture. And some fell among the thorns and the thorns grew up with it and choked it out. And some fell on good soil and grew up and yielded up an hundredfold.

Let us Pray;

GRANT, O Lord, to all who till the ground, the wisdom to understand thy laws and to cooperate with thy wise ordering of the world. Give to men of science the power to discover the secrets of nature. Give to our statesmen the will to make just laws. Give to farmers and laborers and industrialists the desire to work together in the spirit of justice and good will. And grant that the fruits of thy bountiful earth may not be hoarded by selfish men, but that all who work may share abundantly in the harvest of thy soil, according to thy will as revealed to us in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

That thou wilt give men skill and enterprise in husbanding the resources of the earth, that all thy children may have meat enough;

Response: We beseech thee.

That we may not try to live by bread alone, but measure all our wealth and all our labor by thy standards:

Response: We beseech thee.

That the condition of men's daily toil may not starve the souls whom thou hast made for thyself;

Response: We beseech thee.

That the conscience of mankind may be so aroused that we shall no more eat the bread of oppression, but work together in comradeship and justice;

Response: We beseech thee.

That thou wilt give us all a deeper sense of our membership one of another, so that the bonds of our economic life may be the expression of our fellowship in Christ.

Response: We beseech thee.

(For Fruitful Seasons)

ALMIGHTY God who hast blessed the earth that it should be fruitful and bring forth whatsoever is need ful for the life of man, and hast commanded us to work with quietness and eat our own bread; Bless the labors of the husbandmen and grant such seasonable weather that we may

gather in the fruits of the earth, and ever rejoice in thy goodness to the praise of thy holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

(Blessing of the Sower and the Reaper)

MAY God give us his blessing and the earth bring forth her increase abundantly that the sower may sow in joy and the reapers gather their sheaves in gladness and ever bless his Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

HYMN: 3

And the Minister shall say:

For the simple, honest, and clean things of life;
For the stirring of all young life throughout the countryside;
For hard work in the open that wearies and satisfies a man;
For the security of a home to come back to, a roof over our heads,
a fire in our kitchens, food to eat, and sound sleep at night;

Answer. Thanks be to God.

Minister. Let us pray.

(For Animals)

O HEAVENLY Father, who in thy wondrous goodness had the birds and beasts of the stable share in the mystery and the wonder of the Holy Nativity of thy dear Son, guard and bless, we beseech thee, the animals which thou dost provide to assist man in his labors and needs; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

(Blessing of the Farm Family)

BLESS, O Lord, the homes and farms and those who live there and do their work. Give them health and purity, strength and humility, goodness and meekness, the fulfillment of the law of Christ and thanksgiving to God, now and always.
Amen.

HYMN: 604

O most high, omnipotent, good Lord God, to thee belong praise, glory, honor, and all blessing.

For our brother the sun, who is our day and who brings us the light; who is fair, and radiant with a very great splendor;
Response: Praised be our Lord.

For our sister the moon, and for the stars which thou hast set clear and lovely in heaven;
Response: Praised be our Lord.

For our brother the wind, and for air and cloud, calms and all weather;
Response: Praised be our Lord.

For our sister water, who is very serviceable unto us and humble and precious and chaste;

Response: Praised be our Lord.

For our brother fire, by whom thou lightest up the night, and who is fair and merry and very mighty and strong;

Response: Praised be our Lord.

For our mother the earth, which doth sustain us and keep us, and bringeth forth divers fruits, and flowers of many colors, and grass;

Response: Praised be our Lord.

For all those who pardon one another for thy love's sake, and who bear weakness and tribulation;

Response: Praised be our Lord.

Blessed are they who peaceable shall endure, walking by thy most holy will; for thou, O most highest, shall give them a crown;

Response: Praise ye and bless ye the Lord and give thanks unto him, and serve him with great humility. Amen.

(Rogationtide)

O GRACIOUS Father, who openest thy hand and fillest all things living with plenteousness; we beseech thee of thine infinite goodness to hear us, who now make our prayers and supplications unto thee. Remember not our sins, but thy promises of mercy. Vouchsafe to bless the lands and multiply the harvests of the world. Let thy breath go forth that it may renew the face of the earth. Show thy loving kindness that our lands may give their increase; and so fill us with good things that the poor and needy may give thanks unto thy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer.

HYMN: 721

May the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit rest upon us and upon all our work and worship done in his Name. May he give us light to guide us, courage to support us, and love to unite us, now and for evermore.

Amen.

RECESSIONAL HYMN: 305