LECTIONARY FOR LAST WEEK OF EASTERTIDE

Morning Evening

Sunday, Easter V. May 9 (Rogation Sunday)

1st Lesson Deuteronomy 6 Deut, 8

2nd Lesson Luke 20:27–21 :4 John 6: 47–69

Monday in Rogation-tide, May 10

1st Lesson Deut. 7: 6–13 Deut. 11: 8--21

2nd Lesson Matt. 6: 5–18 Matt. 6: 19--end

Tuesday in Rogation-tide, May 11

1st Lesson Deut. 28: 1--14 1 Kings 8: 22--43

2nd Lesson Luke 5: 1–11 James 5: 1--18

Wednesday in Rogation-tide, May 12

1st Lesson Joel 2: 21–27 Benedicite, in BCP, p 11--13

2nd Lesson John 6: 22–40 Luke 24: 36--end

ASCENSION DAY, May 13,

1st Lesson 2 Kings 2: 1–15 Daniel 7: 9-10, 13--14

2nd Lesson Ephesians 4: 1--16 Hebrews 1

Friday, May 14

1st Lesson Judges 2: 6—end Judges 4

2nd Lesson Hebrews 2 Hebrews 3

Saturday, May 15

1st Lesson Judges 5 Judges 6: 1--24

2nd Lesson Hebrews 4: 1–13 Hebrews 4:14–5:10

The Sunday in Ascension-tide, May 16

1st Lesson Deut. 26 Deut. 30

2nd Lesson John 14: 1–14 John 16:5--end

EASTER V

This fifth and last Sunday after Easter Day is in our Prayer Book “commonly called Rogation Sunday,” and the next three week-days are called “Rogation Days.” This unusual word “rogation” derives from the Latin verb *rogare*, which means “to ask.” In today's Gospel, Jesus speaks twice of “asking the Father ... in His name.” This is all about prayer, both of the supplicatory and intercessory types. To explain those tongue-twisting words, supplication is asking for ourselves and our own needs, while intercession is asking for the needs of others.

Rogation-tide (that is today and the next three days) took its origin in a time and place when farmers were putting in their crops about this time of the year. In a more reverent age, this had powerful spiritual meaning, when devout hard-working people acknowledged their dependence on God and begged His merciful blessing on all their endeavors. Rogation-tide was celebrated by outdoor processions around the fields. These eventually came to serve a secondary purpose of walking the property lines once each year to mark off every farmer's real estate.

Today's Gospel begins with what surely sounds like an extravagant promise: “Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.” (That sounds almost as extravagant as the concluding words, “be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”) On the face of it, it sounds as if the Saviour promised that we will get whatever we ask for, if we only say “in Jesus' name, Amen” at the end of every prayer.

Practically every prayer in our Prayer Book concludes with the formula “through Jesus Christ our Lord.” In those words we acknowledge that He is our great high priest, our advocate with the Father, who speaks on our behalf and intercedes for us at the Father's heavenly throne. But for that fact, we should not dare to pray at all. Without Jesus, we would have no right to pray and any prayer on our part would be a presumptuous intrusion into God's throne-room.

But there is more to praying or asking “in His name” than merely reciting a well-worn formula at the end of every prayer. Praying in the name of Jesus means praying with His spirit and attitude. Jesus was a person of constant prayer. His most sublime prayer was uttered in the Garden of Gethsemane, “Father, let this cup pass from me, but nevertheless, not my will but thine be done.”

Praying “in His name” is praying, as He did, in humble and total submission to the Father's Will. Not to manipulate God or to gain our own selfish ends, but to set forth His glory. That is the prayer God will bless and answer in His own time and His own way. LKW