

by  
Didymus

### Evening Holy Communion readings:-

Song of Solomon ch.4 v16 – ch.5 v2, ch.8 vv6/7

Rev ch.3 v14-end

Gospel: Luke ch.22, vv24-30

Today in Rogation Sunday, a day when our thoughts and prayers should be focussed on our food, our “daily bread”. After what we have been through in the last year or so, when our minds were concerned with our safety and well-being, food has been even more important to us than ever. Those who produce, gather, sell and prepare our food have become more important to us than before. The challenge has been well met, with producers finding ways to sell and deliver, with pubs and restaurants cooking meals to be taken away or delivered, and good people cooking and helping the older ones to keep safe but fed. It has been a warming experience to see communities working together to cope with restrictions.



Rogation Sunday is another example of the Christian faith taking over a pagan rite of prayer and thanksgiving, *Robigalia*, when prayers were offered to ensure a good harvest. *Rogatio* is Latin for a plea or request. There are three Rogation days following, with the Ascension Day next Thursday. The boundaries of parishes were walked by the incumbent, stopping to pray and bless farms, cattle sheds, wells, rivers, orchards and fields. Sometimes the incumbent might have ridden on horseback. No doubt places such as Port Isaac and Padstow would include harbours, fishing boats and nets as well. Perhaps the three extra days were needed to round up the stragglers? Something tells me that the practice is unlikely to be pursued nowadays!



The readings are a mixed bunch. The Song of Solomon is concerned about love, human physical and spiritual love, and can be uncomfortably direct. Not for nothing is it regarded as the Bible’s Mills and Boon! It is poetic, romantic and at times has a worrying suggestion of immorality. Love is God’s gift, and we live in the light and warmth of God’s love. We live in a damaged and deadly world, made so by human hands, and here we can read of the love that should fill our lives, lest we forget.

Revelations briefly makes sense before bursting into apocalyptic visions. It has always seemed odd to me that St. John the Divine should start with a quasi-Pauline approach to the seven churches of Asia Minor thirty years after Paul’s death. It reads plausibly, almost as Paul might have written, and has a message for us. Taken as a whole, are we neither cold nor hot, but just lukewarm? Was it impatience that moved John to dream of God in all his wonder and glory?

The Gospel according to Luke has Jesus and his Disciples arguing over who was greatest, which at first appears to relate to the washing of feet in John’s Gospel ch.13. Yet Jesus did not put them down firmly as in John, when he emphasised the importance of service. This debate was on a different subject unrelated to that of the previous verses when Jesus declared that one of them would betray him, and it is not clear how the debate about seniority emerged from such a serious turn of events –they wanted to know who would do such a thing, as V.23 records.

The debate seems a trifle inconclusive to me, and the question was irrelevant in any case.



In our prayers let us remember, as always, to give thanks for all that we have received, personally and through the gift of those we love. In particular we need to thank God for our food, physically and spiritually, and for the labours of all who bring it to us one way or another.

Let us pray for the nations of the world and the harmony that should exist, but does not at present. We need to think of those nations and peoples who are suffering violence, discrimination, injustice and loss of freedom, as well as that constant suffering from poverty and disease.

*Loving Father, who has made all people in your own likeness, and loves all that you have made: Do not suffer the world to separate itself from you by building barriers of race, colour and creed. Teach us to regard the members of all countries and communities as fellow inheritors of your Kingdom, through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. Amen.*