



# Unwrapping the

# Gifts

## Rogate Sunday

by Rev. Jeffrey M. Keuning

Today is **ROGATE SUNDAY**. Traditionally, this day is set aside as one on which Christians give special thanks and praise to God for the bountiful blessings of the field.

The word *rogation*, comes from the Latin *rogare*, meaning “to ask” or “to pray.” The three days preceding Ascension Day have been known in the Church as Rogation Days, that is, days of prayer, for more than 1,500 years. They began in the fifth century in France, when there had been crop failures due to earthquakes and bad weather, with resulting famine. St. Mamertus, bishop of Vienne, introduced the custom of pastor and people making penitential processions, calling upon God to help, and asking His intervention.

Other communities took up the custom, and St. Gregory the Great later regulated the practice. Since then, it has been the custom to hold, each year before Ascension Day, a special Rogation Service.

The purpose of Rogation Day is to implore the mercy of God that He may keep us from all evils of body and soul, and give to the plants of the field an increase.



Image: Ed Riojas

In the spring, when the fields are becoming green and there is promise of good harvest—but also the possibilities of destruction through frost, hail, rainstorms, wind, or tornados—the prayers are a reminder to feeble man to turn with humility and confidence to the Giver of all good. For it is not the earth alone, nor the busy hand of man upon which the increase depends; but it is God who gives the increase.

## BLESSING OF THE SOIL AND THE SEED

P The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof,

**C the world and those who dwell therein.**

Psalm 24:1

P O LORD, how manifold are your works!

**C In wisdom have you made them all;**

**the earth is full of your creatures.**

Psalm 104:24

P While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat,

**C summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.**

Genesis 8:22

P Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love,

**C for his wondrous works to the children of man!**

Psalm 107:31

P Unless You bless,

**C We labor in vain, merciful Lord.**

adapt. Psalm 127:1

P He does not deal with us according to our sins,

**C nor repay us according to our iniquities.**

Psalm 103:10

P The LORD is good to all,

**C and his mercy is over all that he has made.**

Psalm 145:9

P The LORD our God be with us, as he was with our fathers.

**C May he not leave us or forsake us.**

1 Kings 8:57

P Oh, save your people and bless your heritage!

**C Be their shepherd and carry them forever.**

Psalm 28:9

P May God's blessing rest upon soil and seed throughout our land to feed and clothe.

**C Amen.**

P Lord God, gracious and merciful Father, because You have promised that You will hear us when we bring You our cares, we implore You not to deal with us according to our sins but according to Your mercy. Send seasonable weather so that in due time the earth may yield her increase. Remind us ever to receive with thanks our daily bread, trusting in You as our gracious God; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**C Amen.**

P Almighty God, You bless the earth to make it fruitful, bringing forth in abundance whatever is needed for the support of our lives. Prosper the work of farmers and all those who labor to bring food to our table. Grant them seasonable weather that they may gather in the fruits of the earth in abundance and proclaim Your goodness with thanksgiving; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**C Amen.**