

EASTER 5
ROGATION SUNDAY

THE COLLECT

O LORD, from whom all good things do come; Grant to us thy humble servants, that by thy holy inspiration we may think those things that are good, and by thy merciful guiding may perform the same; through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.



1. From whom do all good things come?
A. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from _____, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variability, neither shadow of turning." (James 1:17)
2. How are we enabled to think any thing that is good?
A. By God's holy _____. "Not htat we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God." (2 Corinthians 3:5)
3. How are we enabled to perform that which is good?
A. By God's merciful _____. "For it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. (Philippians 2:13)

INTRODUCTION.

What is this day? Fifth Sunday after Easter. And next Thursday? Ascension Day. So this is the last Sunday of the Easter Season. The Collect for this last Sunday of Easter is a good "bookend" to the Collect of Easter day. In both Collects we pray that good desires given us by God be brought to good effect, to be performed. Why should such thoughts be connected with this season? It is springtime, when the fruit-trees blossom; but the blossom is the promise of fruit. Many things may hinder it—frost, storm, wind &c—so the trees need God's care that the flowers may end in fruit. The flowers are like our good desires—they are the promise of good deeds. Many things may hinder—coldness, indifference, indulgence, selfishness, ease, worldly cares, &c.—so we need God's grace to enable us to persevere. A tree whose blossoms are frostbitten is worse off than if it had borne none. So good desires if not carried out leave us worse off than if we had not had them.



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I. GOOD DESIRES FELT.

1. **Why are good Desires felt?** God puts them into our hearts: “By Thy special grace preventing us,” and “By thy holy inspiration”. Look at the Collect of Seventh Sunday after Trinity. What is God called? “The _____ and _____ of all good things.” The second Collect at Evening Prayer says, “From whom all holy desires...do proceed.” And see also James 1:17.
2. **What sort of Desires** are these? Here are examples from Scripture:
 - (a) St. Matthew 9—Here was the desire that the *Jews* might be helped and taught and have the Gospel preached to them.
 - (b) Acts 16—Here it was that the *Gentiles* might be helped and taught and have the same Gospel preached.
 - (c) 2 Corinthians 8—Here it was the desire to help the *needy* by giving money.
3. **How does God plant these Desires?** The need, whether it is spiritual or physical is first seen by Christ, and then He shows us the need and makes us share with Him the desire to help. He does this when He brings to our sight or knowledge the needy, hungry, suffering, ignorant, who need food, care, money, nursing, teaching. But this desire must be encouraged and followed up.

II. GOOD DESIRES FURTHERED.

1. **Why must good desires be furthered?** When we see suffering, we feel pity and want to help, but soon the thought comes that we shall have to give up something—pleasure, indulgence, ease, comfort, time, money, sometimes home and friends, and then we begin to draw back. Our good desire gets cold and feeble.
2. **How can good desires be furthered?** (a) *By prayer*. Christ taught the Apostles to put their desires into a prayer (St. Matthew 9:38). (b) *By self-sacrifice*. Then Christ made them answer their own prayer by sending them forth.

III. EXAMPLES OF GOOD DESIRES BEING FRUITFUL IN GOOD WORKS

1. The desire of Gregory the Great to convert the English. The desire of Wilberforce and others to free the slaves. The desire of John Howard to help the prisoners. The desire of Robert Raikes and John Pounds to teach the ignorant children. The good man’s desire to give a poor girl a Bible in her own language.
2. **Never then make light of good desires.** They come from God. Thank God for them. Cherish them; don’t put them away or crush or forget them. Turn them into prayers. Be ready to make sacrifices, to work and give, to carry them out. You know not what enormous good may come of them perhaps years after your death. God, who puts into your hearts good desires, will enable you to bring the same to good effect.

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