

ROGATION SERVICE

**The Blessing of Farming, Diversification
and Wildlife
at Home Farm, Sulhamstead**

Sunday, 1st May 2016

**Conducted by the Revd John Townend
Honorary Chaplain to the
Newbury and District Agricultural Society
with
The Wantage Silver Band**

INTRODUCTION and WELCOME at St Mary's, Sulhamstead Abbots

Rogation (from the Latin 'Rogare' to ask) is the time when we ask God's blessing on the land, the crops, our livestock and indeed upon the untamed countryside that sustains us. In the distant past our forebears 'Beat the Bounds' by processing around the boundaries of their parishes, praying for the success of the newly sown crops, for fair weather and for God to keep the harvest free from disease. Today we too ask for God's blessing in this place, acknowledge our dependence on him for our well-being and thank him for his many gifts to us.

The Opening Prayer

The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it.

The compass of the world and all those who dwell in it.

There is a time for working and a time for resting, a time for ploughing and a time for sowing, a time for dressing and a time for harvesting, there is a time for lambing and a time for culling, there is a time for the byre, a time for the field, a time for the market and a time for the desk; and there is a time greatly to be longed for, when all is completed and God is all in all.

Seeds we bring;

We ask you to bless them, Lord.

Fields we bring;

We ask you to bless them, Lord.

Sheep and cattle we bring;

We ask you to bless them, Lord.

Horses and ponies we bring;

We ask you to bless them, Lord.

Pigs and fowl we bring;

We ask you to bless them, Lord.

Dogs and cats and all our pets we bring;

We ask you to bless them, Lord.

Praise the Lord of heaven.

Praise him upon earth.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

As it was in the beginning, is now and shall be for ever. Amen.

The First Stop – Home Farm, Sulhamstead, Livestock

Hymn

All creatures of our God and King,
lift up your voice and with us sing

Alleluia, alleluia.

Thou burning sun with golden beam,
thou silver moon with softer gleam,

*O praise him, O praise him,
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.*

Thou flowing water, pure and clear,
make music for thy Lord to hear,

O praise him, alleluia.

Thou fire so masterful and bright,
that givest man both warmth and light:

*O praise him, O praise him,
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.*

Dear mother earth, who day by day
unfoldest blessings on our way,

Alleluia, alleluia.

The flowers and fruits that in thee grow,
let them his glory also show:

*O praise him, O praise him,
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.*

Let all things their Creator bless,
and worship him in humbleness;

O praise him, alleluia.

Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son,
and praise the Spirit, Three in One;

*O praise him, O praise him,
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.*

The First Reading to be read by Robert Astor, President **Isaiah; Chapter 11, verses 6 – 9**

The wolf shall also dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; the calf and the young lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the suckling child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Prayer and Blessing for Livestock

Lord God, you surround us and all things living with your love; we thank you for the companionship of animals and birds, without which there would be for humankind a great loneliness of spirit. When we are careless of them and forget that they are your creatures, forgive us we pray. May God's blessing shower upon all his creatures; both animals and plants, herds, flocks and crops, may we ever be grateful for your abundance and flourish; in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

The Second Stop – Boar Moor Wood, Wildlife and Conservation

Hymn

O Lord, my God, when I in awesome wonder
consider all the works thy hand hath made,
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,
thy power throughout the universe displayed.

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee:
how great thou art, how great thou art.*

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God to thee:
how great thou art, how great thou art.*

When through the woods and forest glades I wander,
and hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;
When I look down from lofty mountain grandeur,
and hear the brook, and feel the gentle breeze,
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee...

And when I think that God, his Son not sparing,
sent him to die, I scarce can take it in,
that on the cross my burden gladly bearing,
he bled and died to take away my sin,
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee...

When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation,
and take me home what joy shall fill my heart;
then I shall bow in humble adoration,
and there proclaim: my God, how great thou art,
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee...

The Second Reading To be read by Judith Marcham, Vice Chairman

Song of Solomon; Chapter 2, verses 11 – 13

For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth. The time of the singing of the birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land. The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Prayer and Blessing for the Countryside

Almighty God, Lord of heaven and earth and maker of all things; as we stand among the plants that feed us, help us to appreciate not only that which we can tame and grow but also the wild and untamed. Help us to understand the place of all your creatures within our world. Hear us as we pray for the wildlife and countryside and help us to treat them with respect. Bless, we pray, the land of our county, the open downs, the trees of our woodlands and the insects, birds and animals which make their home among them through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

The Third Stop – Church Field, Crops

Hymn

For the beauty of the earth,
for the beauty of the skies,
for the love which from our birth
over and around us lies:

*Lord of all, to thee we raise
this our sacrifice of praise.*

For the beauty of each hour
of the day and of the night,
hill and vale and tree and flower,
sun and moon and stars of light:

For the joy of human love,
brother, sister, parent, child,
friends on earth, and friends above,
pleasures pure and undefiled:

For each perfect gift of thine,
to our race so freely given,
graces human and divine,
flowers of earth and buds of heaven:

For thy Church which evermore
lifteth holy hands above,
offering up on every shore
her pure sacrifice of love:
*Lord of all, to thee we raise
this our sacrifice of praise.*

The Third Reading To be read by Keith Chopping, Chairman
The Gospel according to St Luke; Chapter 11, verses 9 – 13

Jesus said to his disciples, ‘So I say to you, Ask and it will be given to you; search and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish? Or if the child asks for an egg will give a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!’

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Prayer and Blessing for the Crops and All who Work on the Land

Almighty God, we thank you for those who through their work on field and farm provide food for our sustenance. We pray for those in our own nation facing the demands of farming in difficult times, for their families and the rural communities of which they are part. We pray for the distressed, the depressed and the defeated, that they may find the help they need. We pray for those who have the energy, insight, expertise and support to succeed despite problems, that they may shine as a beacon of hope.

Bless the labours of those who work in the fields. Bless the increase of the crops and grain and fruit-bearing trees, that bread and wine and wholesome good food may be shared and enjoyed by all your children, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

**The Final Stop – St Mary’s Church –
Our Communities, The World and the Next Generation**

The Address given by the Revd Dr Anthony Peabody

Prayers and Blessing of our homes and villages, the world and the future

Almighty God, whose will it is that the earth should bear its fruit in due season. Bless the labours of those who work on the land and in industry; bless this community and the villages and towns from which we come this day; and all their people. Visit us with your mercy, surround us with your love, and make us perfect to do your will; we ask it in the name of your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

God our Father, thank you for the world in which we live;
thank you for providing us with beauty, with interest, with wonder and utility;
thank you for providing us with everything we need and all that we could desire.
Help us never to do anything which would make the world uglier or sadder.
Help us always to attempt to add to the world's beauty and joy; we ask this
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Heavenly Father, your Son Jesus Christ, grew to adulthood in an earthly home
and followed in the footsteps of his earthly father, Joseph, until his ministry
began. Hear us as we pray for our children, especially those raised on our farms
who wish to follow a career in agriculture. We give thanks for our Young
Farmers Clubs and their members, may they be blessed as they learn and grow
and seek to use the gifts you have given to them; we ask this in the name of
Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

As our Saviour taught us so we pray with confidence
**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come; thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.**

Hymn *The collection is taken for the Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institute*

We plough the fields, and scatter
the good seed on the land,
but it is fed and watered
by God's almighty hand:
he sends the snow in winter,
the warmth to swell the grain,
the breezes, and the sunshine,
the soft, refreshing rain.

*All good gifts around us
are sent from heaven above;
then thank the Lord, O thank the Lord,
for all his love.*

He only is the maker
of all things near and far;
he paints the wayside flower,
he lights the evening star;
the winds and waves obey him,
by him the birds are fed;
much more to us his children,
he gives our daily bread.

*All good gifts around us
are sent from heaven above;
then thank the Lord, O thank the Lord,
for all his love*

We thank thee then, O Father,
for all things bright and good,
the seed-time and the harvest,
our life, our health, our food.
Accept the gifts we offer
for all thy love imparts,
and, what thou most desirest,
our humble, thankful hearts.

*All good gifts around us
are sent from heaven above;
then thank the Lord, O thank the Lord,
for all his love*

The Blessing

May the road rise to meet you,
may the wind be always at your back,
may the sun shine warm upon your face,
may the rain fall soft upon your fields;
and until we meet again
may God hold you in the palm of his hand;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**