

Of course you know what today is. Happy Rogate Day. You heard, **Pray to the Lord He take the serpents from us.** Sounds reasonable. We sinned, we repent. We're sorry. **We sinned against God and Moses.** We know we've done is wrong. Now please take the snakes away. But God doesn't answer prayer that way; doesn't take away the snakes. They still bite and our God is merciful, full of compassion. He always provides the remedy for our needs. He sets before them the 'international symbol of medicine', that they may be saved.

What's going on in Numbers 21. The people are impatient, complain. What happened? The people of Isreal, exodus, Moses led them out of bondage, death; through the Red Sea, as noted in Scripture, a picture of baptism, God drownings our sinful nature, the powers of death. In your baptism, your own Red Sea crossing, of exodus of our bondage and death.

Soon after the Red Sea, in a wilderness and the people grumble that God would take care of them. God provided manna, bread of heaven, God calls it His glory; which Jesus, in John 6, calls a foretaste of Him in the Eucharist, to sustain you in this wilderness as you journey to a greater promise land. Also water from the rock which St. Paul says too is Jesus. All they'd seen, plagues, enemy destroy, Red Sea, Mt.Sinai, water from rock, pillar of fire and cloud; all they had, with full bellies, constantly grumble against God. But are they any worse than you?

Finally God said "that's it". This generation will not enter the promise land, so they wander 40 years; God still provided, still kept them alive; their clothes, shoes don't wear out, that ungrateful generation dies off. Then their children, new generation; also unfaithful, still complain. **Loathe this worthless food**, actually the word there, Hebrew (lechem), Greek (artos) means special bread, **loathe this worthless bread** they say. Even Moses and Aaron, drawn into sin, Moses not following God's directions; God will not let even them enter the promise land. Moses will later die at Mt. Nebo. Aaron just died at Mt. Hor, the people mourning, the start of the OT reading. So they set out to the promise land, untrusting again, decide to go around the land of Edom, which are the ancestors of Esau, and these people of Isreal which is Jacob; feuds get passed down generations. So the people take a long route, they hate it, impatient, moving in wrong direction, despair because God is taking too long.

Look at you. God takes too long on things in your life doesn't He? It's obvious what needs to happen, it's obvious what needs to changes. Think God why aren't you doing more, why aren't you getting rid of the problem,

God why don't you fix things now, and on and on. How often, what a bunch of grumbling, untrusting, impatient people. Repent.

God allows affliction, but in mercy, uses it for good and provides rescue. for their good; provided the means of rescue from snakes. And right before John 3:16, this story, all points Jesus lifted up in glory that you may be rescued, have life. We like them, want the snakes gone. The world wonders why God allows evil, why suffering?

So why does the Lord leave snakes in your life? That He always works a greater good. To see His grace is sufficient for you. To teach you patience; teach you not to live for this world, not to live for yourself. Leading you, guiding you to form you as His people. We have a completely different perspective, reality than rest of the world, even most Christians. Every affliction, every trial, snack are opportunities, God uses to bless you with patience, always giving rescue, always compassion, always working every evil and hardship, to draw you closer to Him, see more of His love, and working it all for your good. And He answers every, single, prayer.

Think of the mothers praying 85 years ago this morning, Mother's Day, 1941. Heard on radio, in papers, the German blitz, 57 days of England bombed, now London firebomb. Everyone knew what's coming. The draft was already in place. Mother's praying, know what is sure to come to the sons, husbands. And what the next 4 years brings. And through it all for the Christian, every mother's prayer was answer, their boy or husband made it back from war, or mom would patiently wait and embrace their son, husband again for eternity in paradise. They have all things.

In spite of a world increasingly disparaging prayer. The prayer of our mothers always answered. Your prayers hold back the forces of darkness and evil and bring Your Father's holy will to bear.

Luther would quip, if the next day was full, knew it'd be challenging, more to get done that could be done, he'd wake up an hour earlier. Wake up earlier to read *more* Scripture, *more* time to pray. We need to think like that; as St. James told you today, **Be doers**. Live out this resurrected life given you. If God is for us who can be against us? We're optimistic, not because we don't expect snakes, tribulation, sorrow but because we know what God has promised. Trust Him. Be patient. Be bold in the midst of difficulty and unafraid of the world. And of snakes. What can truly harm His own? Be content and rejoice. Jesus lives. Your prayers matter. He will act. There is not more comforting words to you in your days that this; **I have said these things to you that in Me**, (the night Jesus joins Himself to you in the Supper), **that in Me, you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but take heart, I have overcome the world.**