



The Fifth Sunday after Trinity.

The Collect.

GRANT, O Lord, we beseech thee, that the course of this world may be so peaceably ordered by thy governance, that thy Church may joyfully serve thee in all godly quietness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

This prayer was composed at a time when the vicious enemies – Huns, Vandals, Goths - were at the gates of Rome; therefore, its expressions were made from hearts totally aware of their dependence upon the mercy of God. As a product of the Gregorian Sacramentary, the prayer concerns the Reformation Doctrine of the First Use of the Law. (Barbee & Zahl) The First Use of the Law is a restraining force in the world against all wickedness. Without a moral restraint, the world would become so completely wicked that life could not exist. The Second Use of the Law, not addressed here, is the function of the Law as a mirror to our imperfections in the face of the Law – a school teacher which demands a greater perfection than we are ever able to attain, but must strive for.

Why do we have “wars and rumors of war” in all quarters of the world? We see a contrast of beliefs that are diametrically opposed to one another abroad in the world today. The three major beliefs are Christianity, atheism, and Islam. You may discount the second (atheism) for it is a feigned belief . Every atheist knows, as does every other human being, that there is a God. But the atheist is in denial due to the dire ramifications the existence of God has for his demented soul. But Islam is a different story. Even more demented than the atheist, the Muslim believes that his god is Allah,

and that Allah desires the wholesale slaughter, by the cruelest means, of all who will not bow the knee to his wicked rule. I believe that Satan himself would devise such a religion if he had the time – and he presently does have the time. Having lived in Iran BEFORE, DURING, and AFTER the Islamic Revolution there, I feel that I have some credibility to advance an informed assessment on the evils of Islam. I will not, here, go into the heart-sickening details. But I can say with certainty that faith, professed at the point of the sword, is no faith at all.

Our Prayer of Collect today reminds that there does exist the possibility of a peaceable kingdom, but that Kingdom must find its governance in a Holy God and not a false one. The peace of God is a peace that cannot be comprehended through the designs and opinions of man: *And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.* (Phil 4:7) Such a peace cannot be possessed by a people who are nominal Christians, but only by those who have taken on the Mind of Christ. His Mind does not vindictively pursue those who are ignorant of Him, but seeks them out in love to open their eyes to the Light that scatters the darkness and ennobles the soul.

This Prayer asks for a grant from the proper source – the Lord! *GRANT, O Lord.* You may beg alms from a pauper all you please, but your need will never be granted because the pauper has no means by which your prayer may be granted. If we have great need, with no means of satisfying within our own means, we must go to the One who has the resources to grant our request. *For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine. call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.* (Psalms 50:10, 11, 15)

Our petition is not an ultimatum for we have no grounds to demand anything of the Most High King. *GRANT, O Lord, we beseech thee.* Standing in the need of favors which we are powerless to acquire of our own volition, we approach the Throne of Grace as children begging for the mercy and favor of a loving Father. There is a different approach to that Throne being deceitfully preached from the sensational pulpits of America today that claims we can DEMAND anything of God and He is bound to grant the demand. What an evil and foolish lie. The very definition of a King is that He is Sovereign on His Throne. He may grant grace, or withhold mercy, to whom He pleases and for reasons that are His alone. But I can assure you of this one point: anything besought of God that is in accord with His own Will to grant, shall be granted. So, if we have taken on the Mind of Christ, our requests shall be uttered out of that Mind. But if we harbor some hidden wickedness in our hearts, God will not hear our petitions. We dare not get angry with God if He does not hear our prayers. We may not blame His Holy ears for being unhearing. When our prayers are not heard, we need to look within, not seeking excuses without: *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:* (Psalms 66:18)

Should we ask our prayers to be granted out of selfish desires? The model prayer our Lord taught us to pray has no such selfish interest at heart except that we receive only our daily bread. We also pray in the Lord's Prayer that God's will be done "*on earth as it is in Heaven.*" Is this truly the desire of our hearts? It certainly should be for, if God's will is done, it will be done by His people and for His purposes. There will be no abuse of little children, no murders or theft, no cruel wars, no rape or adultery – for the Will of God prohibits any slight wickedness. And so we pray ". . . *that the course of this world may be so peaceably ordered by thy governance.* All who disobey the Sovereign of a Kingdom are rebels to His authority. His rule is not borne by an iron

yoke, but a light and easy to bear yoke of love. But the children of the devil cannot abide such a yoke, for love and obedience thereto are alien to their hearts which are full of evil imaginations. One only needs to consider the beheadings and brutal treatment of innocents in the Middle East to pray that such evil never invades our own shores and borders. I fear that we are, by our own present wickedness as a nation, inviting the same into our very parlors.

What is the objective of the God-governed peace for which we plead? “....*that thy Church may joyfully serve thee in all godly quietness.*” Please note that one of the benefits of a Godly governance is **joy**. We not only seek to serve God in quiet obedience, but even joyfully do so. Unbelievably so, there are far greater numbers of Christians being martyred today than in any previous period of the history of the world. Can we fathom that? As God’s Word becomes more generally known, evil also abounds the more – for Satan knows his days are numbered and his death throes are horrendous. If we are one with Jesus Christ, He will be One with us. When we go seeking for mercy of the Father, we had best take His only Begotten Son along with us to plead our cause, and it shall be granted assuredly. Godly quietness is not peace at all cost, but a Godly peace – a peace that acknowledges love, mercy, and grace to be grants of God to us, and to our fellows.