



The Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity.

The Collect.

O GOD, forasmuch as without thee we are not able to please thee; Mercifully grant that thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

4. Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. (Exodus 19:4)

11. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: 12. So the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him. (Deuteronomy 32:11-12)

14. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, etc (Revelations 12:14)

The Great Eagle is one of the more beautiful and amazing allusions to the nature of Christ found in all of God's Creation. In the least complex sense, the great Eagle as Monarch of the skies is very like Christ as the King of Heaven. The similitudes are practically inexhaustible. Just as the ground squirrels, rabbits and other vermin attempt to hide their actions and movements from the Great Eagle, so does the sinner attempt to

hide in the holes and caverns of their unrighteousness from the watchful eye of Christ. There is no avian that can fly higher in the sky than the Eagle. Just so, there is no higher King than Christ, for He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Both the Eagle, and Christ, are of noble and royal blood – and they are so by nature of their birth to us.

One cannot help but be deeply moved by the plaintive and prophetic words of Christ pronounced over Jerusalem describing the terror to come to that city (and it did occur in 70 A.D. via the Roman Army commanded by Titus). *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!* (Luke 13:34) Like the wings of an Eagle, the wings of Christ are very broad and able to cover all who trust in Him. *Thus saith the Lord GOD; A great eagle with great wings, longwinged, full of feathers, which had divers colours, came unto Lebanon, and took the highest branch of the cedar*(Ezekiel 17:3) But the wings of Christ cannot protect if we remain at a distance from Him – we must flee to His sheltering wings, not only at times of distress, but at ALL times!

Just as the Lion is the Ruler of the Jungle, so is the Eagle the Ruler of the skies. He is the strongest adventurer on wings. Christ, too, is the Lion of Judah, and the Bright and Morning Star. The Eagle has the capability to fly above the storms of life. He often flies so high that his prey beneath cannot see him. So is Christ so very high in His ways and His doings that we cannot see Him until He comes near. We see His shadow first, and then the fullness of His Person. He reveals Himself through the agency of the Holy Ghost prompting our understanding from His Holy Word.

The way of the Eagle in its flight is described as "too wonderful" by Solomon (Proverbs 30:18-19). The way of Christ is too wonderful, as well, for us to fully comprehend. There are some blessings that are simply too wonderful to describe, and that is the nature of Christ to us.

The eye of the Eagle is a piercing eye that can distinguish clearly from great distances. *"....she seeketh the prey, and her eyes behold afar off.* (Job 39:29) So the eyes of Christ can penetrate great distances – even from His Throne in Heaven – and observe the secrets of men's hearts.

The Eagle is swift to come to the defense of its young, or to apprehend its prey. Christ is swift to come to the defense of His Church and people, and to execute judgment against those wicked who rebel against heaven. The Eagle fights against serpents and conquers them. So does Christ contend with that old Serpent and Dragon of the Garden, Satan, and has unconditionally defeated him!

The Eagle has an amazing ability to fly straight toward the sun when the archer takes aim. The Eagle has a membrane of tissue that covers his eyes so that he can look directly at the sun. The archer is blinded by the light and loses his target. Christ is very like the Sun itself whose glorious brilliance cannot be viewed by the eye of the sinner, but those who place their trust in Him may fly to His Person and the eyes of the Adversary will be blinded thereby.

The talons of the Eagle are so very strong that the Eagle refrains from holding her young thereby for fear of crushing them. She, therefore, carries her young on her back above her wings. If the enemy arrows fly, it is the mother Eagle who perishes before the

young. How precisely like the sacrificial love of Christ is that mother Eagle.

The Eagle builds her nest upon the high places and upon a strong Rock. *Doth the eagle mount up at thy command, and make her nest on high? She dwelleth and abideth on the rock, upon the crag of the rock, and the strong place.* (Job 39:27-28) Christ, too, makes His home on High, and He is the very Rock of our salvation, and our Fortress in time of trouble.

It is a wonderful mystery that the Eagle builds her nest, first, of sharp twigs and thorns; then of pieces of rock or glass; then she lines the nest with leaves; then fur. When the little ones are of appropriate age, she begins to stir up her nest and remove, first, the fur; then the leaves; until the sharp stones, twigs and thorns make the nest too uncomfortable to bear for the maturing young eagles. *As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: So the Lord alone did lead him* (Deut 32:11-12) The young eagles leave the discomfort of the mother's nest and exercise their limbs by walking about the high born rock. After a time, the mother Eagle does something that is so dismaying and hurtful to the young eagles, that they cannot even begin to understand. She swoops down and shoves them off the rock ledge and allows them to fall, often, hundreds of feet. They are forced to attempt flight. Their untrained wings flail the air as they head to sure destruction below. At the very last moment, the mother swoops beneath the young eagle and catches him on her back. She carries him back to the Rock to await further flight training. Doesn't God often make our nest so uncomfortable that we are forced to leave the comfort of our existence and strike out onto the mountaintop? Doesn't Christ often appear to leave us alone as we flail the air with our spiritual wings until He catches us upon His own broad and loving wings?

If the mother Eagle is unable to find adequate nourishment for the young, she may feed them her own blood from an open wound of her own making. Is this not a Christ-like behavior? *Her young ones also suck up blood: and where the slain are, there is she.* (Job 39:30) Christ feeds us His own Blood. And where those who are "dead in trespasses and sins" there is Christ, too, seeking His own. Can it be more clear? *For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.* (John 6:55-56)

The Eagle has a renewable life-span. *But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.* (Isaiah 40:31) At mid-age, the Eagle often becomes despondent and depressed. He stops flying, and lives in the lowest valleys over which he once soared in grandeur. He loses his will to fly, and he eats mice, insects, or anything else that is found on the floor of the valley. The young eagles shrill and cry to encourage him not to remain in the Valley of Death. After a time, the old Eagle becomes disgusted with his plight. He resolves to climb back up the mountain Rock where he was born so long ago in the mist of ages. Once there, he plucks all of the old, drooping, greasy feathers from his body. Amazingly, new feathers appear and the Eagle becomes as a beautiful young and healthy Eagle. He now has renewed his strength and will live a life longer than heretofore lived. Christ, too, has renewed His strength at the Garden Tomb. He teaches us to also rise from our lowly graves of sin, and be like Him. We may have our resurrection in Him. Have you done?