

The City Church, New York

The Prayer of Thanksgiving and Intercession – Sunday May 14, 2006

The New Testament reports that the risen Messiah led his disciples out near Bethany, lifted his hands in blessing, and ascended into the heavens. The day of his Ascension was this day in AD 33. Let us pray.

Our Ascended Lord Jesus:

On a dark Friday afternoon, on a cruel Roman cross outside the walls of Jerusalem, You laid down Your life for us sinners, living out Your love in Your spilled blood. And on that cross, Atonement was finished for all time and eternity. On that Sunday morning, inside the only temporary tomb the world has ever known, You were raised from death by our Father, proving forever Your victory over sin and the grave. At that tomb, forever emptied of death, Justification was verified. Then, out near Bethany, You commissioned disciples for witness to the world and ascended to the glory of Triune Love, to reign forevermore – our Savior in heaven with scars from earth. Our Salvation accomplished.

We worship and adore You on this, the anniversary of Your departure from the few that You might comfort us, the many, until You return on clouds of glory. Help us, here and now, in this hour together, to more fully know the admittedly little we can comprehend of the cosmic and transcendent drama of transforming compassion into which You draw us.

Today, too, we thank You that so many of us were and are blessed by a dear mother's love. We pray for all who were not, or are not, so blessed. Help the mothers of this congregation to be all You want them to be. Guard them, guide them, give them patience, wisdom and strength. And help the childless to mother the motherless. We're humbled that You, the Creator, humbled Yourself in boyhood and looked to a mother's love there at Bethlehem and Nazareth.

We pray for all in governance, as Your word says we should. Bless our president, our governor and mayor. Bless our legislators, courts and all who work in the many bureaus of government. Give wisdom. Let mercy season justice. And give to us who serve in no particular office, a sense of good citizenship, that we might do our part to do what's right.

We pray that Your will be done in everything, and we add the prayer You taught us:

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 and the power and the glory forever.

Amen.