

At Seedtime: Celebrating a Day of Prayer

In the past, the Church marked certain times of the year with Ember Days and Rogation Days. These included prayers for the Blessing of Seeds at Planting Time, as well as prayers for the Blessing of Fields and Gardens.

At the beginning of the planting season in late winter or early spring, it is traditional for farmers to seek God's blessing on their crops. Whether or not we live in rural communities, we may wish to ask God's protection for seeds (or young plants) in our fields and gardens, especially in the season of Lent. Seeds represent a microcosm of all life. By our prayer, we acknowledge God's control over creation and our stewardship of it.

The Church's *General Norms for the Liturgical Year and Calendar* state: "On Rogation and Ember Days the Church is accustomed to entreat the Lord for the various needs of humanity, especially for the fruits of the earth and for human labor...{45}."

Dioceses all over the country are free to establish their own supplementary days of prayer. This is one of several for the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph, which has designated March 16 as a Diocesan Day of Prayer: **At Seedtime**.

Resources below offer scripture, prayers, and song suggestions. Parish groups and households are encouraged to use them. A Blessing Service (reverse) is taken from those.

- **Book of Blessings (full & abridged editions); Catholic Book Publishing Co.**
 - Order for the Blessing of Seeds at Planting Time
- **Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers; U.S. Catholic Bishops (orig. & rev. ed.)**
 - Rogations Days: Blessing of Fields and Gardens
 - Assumption Day: Blessing of Produce
- **Laudato Si'; Pope Francis #246**
 - A prayer for our earth
 - A Christian prayer in union with creation
- **Roman Missal; Mass for Various Needs and Occasions, #27 At Seedtime**



Blessing of Seeds and Fields at Planting Time

Introduction

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Let us praise God, who plants the seeds and reaps the harvest. Blessed be God for ever. **R.** Blessed be God for ever.

Leader: Today we seek God's blessing of these seeds and the crops they will produce. Christ reminds us that, unless the seed is planted in the earth and dies, it will not yield fruit. As these seeds grow and are cared for, may they be signs of the new life from God.

Scripture Reading (suggestions)

Genesis 2:1-9, 15-17 Genesis 1:1-12, 29-31 Deuteronomy 28:1-6 Isaiah 55:10-13 Joel 2:21-26
2 Corinthians 9:6-10 Matthew 13:31-36 Mark 4:26-29 Luke 12:16-21 John 12:23-25

Intercessions

Almighty God look with benign providence on your children; give us nourishment and growth by blessing the earth with the fruitfulness that sustains human life. As your children, we pray to you by saying: *Lord, hear our prayer.*

- You bless the earth and abundance flows in its pastures; grant that by your blessing, our fields may yield the food we need. **R.**
- You make the wheat grow that provides our daily bread and the gift of the eucharist; give us a crop made rich by abundant rain and fertile soil. **R.**
- You feed the birds of the air and clothe the lilies of the field; teach us not to worry about what we are to eat or drink or wear, but to seek first your way of holiness. **R.**
- You have told us that Christ is the vine and we are branches; grant that by living in your Son we may produce much good fruit. **R.**

Conclusion

O God, from the very beginning of time you commanded the earth to bring forth vegetation and fruit of every kind. You provide the sower with seed and give bread to eat. Grant, we pray, that this land, enriched by your bounty and cultivated by human hands, may be fertile with abundant crops. Then your people, enriched by the gifts of your goodness, will praise you unceasingly now and for ages unending. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **R.** Amen.

Closing Song suggestions:

- A. (Sung to the tune of "All Creatures of our God and King")

Dear mother earth, who day by day
Unfolds rich blessing on our way,
O praise God! Alleluia!

The fruits and flowers that verdant grow,
Let them his praise abundant show.
O praise God, O praise God,
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia. (St. Francis of Assisi)

- B. (sung to the tune of AR HYD NOS ["All Through the Night"])

For the fruits of this creation,
Thanks be to God;
For the gifts to ev'ry nation,
Thanks be to God;
For the plowing, sowing, reaping,
Silent growth while we are sleeping,
Future needs in earth's safe keeping,
Thanks be to God.

In the just reward of labor,
God's will is done;
In the help we give our neighbor,
God's will is done;
In our worldwide task of caring
For the hungry and despairing,
In the harvests we are sharing
God's will is done; (F. Pratt Green)

