

O Jesus, Crowned with All Renown

May 10, 2021 Scott Gunn

*1. O Jesus, crowned with all renown,
since thou the earth hast trod,
thou reignest and by thee come down
henceforth the gifts of God.
Thine is the health and thine the wealth
that in our halls abound,
and thine the beauty and the joy
with which the years are crowned.*

*2. Lord, in their change, let frost and heat,
and winds and dews be given;
all fostering power, all influence sweet,
breathe from the bounteous heaven.
Attemper fair and gentle air
the sunshine and the rain,
that kindly earth with timely birth
may yield her fruits again:*

*3. That we may feed the poor aright,
and, gathering round thy throne,
here, in the holy angel's sight,
repay thee of thine own:
That we may praise thee all our days,
and with the Father's Name,
and with the Holy Spirit's gifts,
the Savior's love proclaim.*

Edward White Benson (1829-1896)

Today begins the rogation days, which we always observe on the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday before Ascension Day. These days are set aside to give thanks for the land and for harvests. In England and other places, it is customary to form processions and go into the fields to bless the crops and the land. One of the traditional hymns for this season is “O Jesus, crowned with all renown,” often sung to Kingsfold, a lovely traditional melody arranged by Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958). Here it is sung by the choir of First Congregational Church in Los Angeles.

I love how this hymn connects the Incarnation (“since thou the earth hast trod”) with Christ’s role as our mediator and advocate. Because Christ has walked on earth, we pray through him to the Father for favorable weather and bountiful harvests.

It’s important that we see two things as we give thanks for plenteous gifts and pray for abundant harvests. First, all that we have comes from God. Second, those who are blessed do not keep it for themselves: the poor must be fed. Rogationtide is about connecting God’s gifts with our right use of them.

These rogation days allow us to focus on our gratitude for creation in ways that sometimes get lost in the Thanksgiving holiday with its family rituals and busyness. And of course, it helps that Rogationtide comes along in the spring when we can have outdoor processions to give thanks for gardens, all kinds of natural beauty, and fields.

Let us give thanks for Christ’s dwelling among us and for all the blessings of this earthly life.