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THE SIXTH WORD

The Finished Work of Christ

On this sixth Sunday of the Lord's Resurrection – the fifth after Easter – we give thanks for the fruit of the Son's Sixth Word from the Cross: "It is finished", or, more literally, "it is accomplished" (John 19:30). In this sixth word Christ finished the work of our redemption, the mediation of God and man. Nothing now holds him back from returning to the Father in the manhood he took upon himself from Mary. As he says in today's gospel lesson (St. John 16:23-33), "I came forth from the Father and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father" – a fact made visible in his Ascension (celebrated this Thursday). Entering into heaven on our behalf, he throws open the gates of prayer (the "rogation" which gives this Sunday its name), and gives us full access to the Father. " whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you". Nothing now holds us back from returning to God, in heart and mind. Precisely for this reason, therefore, the mediation of God and man which Christ has finished and perfected for us must yet be fulfilled in us. This is the point of the epistle lesson (St. James 1:22-27). "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves". It is in a thankful faith fruitful in good works that we show forth our Redeemer's praise: "With a voice of singing declare ye this, and let it be heard, alleluia: utter it even unto the end of the earth: the Lord hath delivered his people, alleluia, alleluia" (Introit. Vocem jucunditatis)

The Rev'd Gavin G. Dunbar

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