

The Blessing of the Bicycles



Whitsun Eve
Saturday May 18, 2013
Red Wing, Minnesota

The Blessing of the Bicycles

By the Quicker Vicar

Collect & Blessing

Vicar: Remember Lord, that many of our bicycles have risen from the dead, much like yourself. Bless these our bikes, let not our hubs spew forth their gears, protect and shield our tyres from flats, grant our crank arms strength that they might remain intact, save our thighs from unquenchable fire on the Maiden Rock Hill, and though we are not worthy, in thy mercy protect us from undue headwinds.

All: Amen

Vicar: Remember that thou art rust, and to rust thou shalt return.
(whilst blessing the assembled bicycles with water from the Holy Water Bottle)

All: Amen

**The Cyclist's Lamentation, or,
eBay, eBay, why hath thou forsaken me?**

Vicar: O St. Rudge hear my prayer
And may my cry goeth up to thee.
For I am the most fortunate of Nutters.

Ladies: Lo, was not my disappointment manifest
When that Rudge Sports didst slippeth from my grasp
Even though I didst bid upon it most valiantly?

Men: In truth I didst keep faith with thee,
And also in St. Miller
who is like unto a lighthouse
To the bicyclist.
I did not pay heed to the fallen angel
Lucas, the Prince of Darkness,
But didst instead remain true of heart.

Ladies: Thou dost know that I in weakness
Was beguiled by the honeyed words
Of Shimano the Temptress;
Who didst promise me much,
But instead did gift me disappointment.

Men: Grant unto me the wisdom to know
When I hath strayed;
So that I might return unto the Joy that shall not Fade.

Ladies: O St. Rudge I hath lit unto thee
Many a candle.
And for Lo, many hath said in this hour,
'Is it the day, Or is it the night?'
For such were the numbers of the candles I didst light unto thee.

Men: Knowing in truth that I was good of Heart;
And honouring all that was wrought of British Steel;
Thou hast sent unto me a 'Wearwell' three-speed bicycle.
And for Lo, the work of it is good.

Ladies: Teach me in this hour the true path;
And guide my wheels upon it.
For many are the works of the Ungodly,
And those who hath made a hash of it.

Vicar: St. Williams pray for me,
and ever guide my chain upon thy sprockets.

Ladies: St. Miller pray for me,
and illumine my path all my days.

Men: St. Sturmey pray for me,
and ever may thy bearings turn freely within thy hub.

Noel: St. Brooks pray for me,
and may thee ever be a comfort to me as I ride upon my way.

Men: St. Dunlop pray for me,
and ever mayest thou keep me from punctures.

Ladies: St. Pawl pray for me,
And ever mayest thou engage my hub.

All: British Steel, forged for me,
Grant that I may always ride
A bike made from thee.

Amen

The Hymn "I Sing a Song of the Chaps on Bikes"



I sing a song of the chaps on bikes; _____ pa - tient and brave and
 They loved their three speed tour so well, and _____ this love _____ made them
 They lived not on - ly in a - ges past, there are gen - tle - men cy - clists



true, who ate and drank and _____ rode real slow on the
 strong. They stayed well right for _____ safe - ty's sake for the
 still. The world is bright with the cy - cling chaps who _____



ride they _____ loved and knew. _____ One's name was Noel and an -
 whole of the two days long. And _____ one was a sai - lor and
 love to ride Bri - tish steel. You can meet them in pubs, or in



oth - er was Jon, and _____ then there was Dave and _____
 one was a priest and _____ one was _____ chased by a
 lanes, or at sea, or in church, or in trains, or in



don't for - get Ron! They are all of them Gen - tle - men and I mean, chaps,
 fierce, wild _____ beast! And there's not a - ny rea - son, no, not the least, why
 shops, or at tea. For those chaps on _____ bikes are Nut - ters like me, and



help me to be one, too.
 I should n't be one, too.
 I mean to be one, too!

The Psalm

Adapted from King James Bible, 23rd Psalm

Please read responsively

Vicar: The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

Congregation: He maketh me to lie down at lunchtime:
 he leadeth me beside back waters.

Vicar: He restoreth my bike:

Congregation: he leadeth me in the bikepaths of righteousness for his
 name's sake.

Vicar: Yea, though I ride through the valley of the Old Man
 River,

I will fear no evil: for thou art with me;

Congregation: thy rod brakes and thy Dynohub™ they comfort me.

Vicar: Thou preparest a table before me in the Eagle's Nest Cof-
 feeshop:

thou anointest my chain with oil;

Congregation: now my chaincase runneth over.

Vicar: Surely goodness and Sturmeys
 shall follow me all the days of my life:

Congregation: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

Prayers for Strength

Vicar: I lift up mine eyes unto the hills;

Congregation: from whence cometh my help?
(*Psalm 121*)

Vicar: Make straight roads for our feet,

Congregation: so that the feeble may not be turned out of the way, but
may be made strong.
(*Hebrews 12:13*)

Vicar: Teach Thy ways unto the wicked: and sinners shall be
converted unto Thee.
(*Psalm 51, more or less*)

Dismissal

Vicar: Remember that life is short and we do not have much
time to gladden the hearts of others, so be swift to love,
make haste to be kind and go forth and ride with joy.

All: RAmen

† † †

Service adapted by Matthew Cole, the Quicker Vicar, 2013.

Notes on Today's Service

The Lamentation at the core of today's service comes to us from Annie Welborn, known to many as Annie from New Zealand on the Bicycle Restoration list where she used to post fairly frequently. Annie is also engaged in good works as a lay person affiliated with The Little

Company of Mary, a religious order started in the late 19th century, where she prays for and works with people in the final stages of life. Health issues forced an early retirement from her former social worker position. She says she is a semi-hermit now but still gets around by bicycle (a Hercules C frame) which "is great because it enables me to meet and talk to sooooo many people in a way I couldn't do if I drove a car". Doesn't sound very hermit-like to me! She does note that after writing "I Am the Most Fortunate of Women" (the original title, we've adapted it slightly) she did come into a Rudge, a gents model with Dunlop alloy rims, but now wears long skirts so it is not really suitable and she'll probably end up passing it on to some lucky chap.

The Lamentation makes reference to many aspects of 3-speed cycling; the Rudge of course is a model that prided itself on being 'handmade' and had a hand in the crankset, as in the image on the front cover of this bulletin and embodied in our Crankifix. Lucas was a brand of famously intermittent electrics for bicycles, motorcycles and cars, hence the Prince of Darkness. Miller made headlights until the early 1960s, Williams made steel cranks and chainrings for most English bikes and Dunlop invented the pneumatic tire and made the alloy rims on Annie's Rudge. Sturmey was one of the founders of Sturmey Archer, whose 3-speed hubs dominate today's ride. Pawls are the little teeth that engage your hub when you pedal but which allow your rear wheel to freewheel when you don't. And as I like to note, the Bible talks about Saint Paul a lot but never even mentions Minneapolis.

Whitsunday, or White Sunday, is Pentecost, tomorrow, when in Christian tradition the Holy Spirit descended on the Apostles and they began speaking in tongues so that even those from distant lands (Chicago, New Jersey) could understand. Pentecost is 50 days after Easter and in northern Europe became a popular date for Baptisms. In Britain, the newly baptized would wear white robes, hence the White Sunday, Whitsun. Also in Britain, **Whitsun Ales** (referring both to beer specifically and boisterous celebrations generally) were popular and involved boys and men getting drunk in the streets, young people dancing, bowling, and shooting their bows and otherwise carrying on with an enthusiasm more vigorous than the strictly religious celebration required. The Vicar is all for observing these traditions and expects rigorous observance from his congregation this evening! Anyway, this was repressed by those humourless Puritans in 1603; after the Restoration, Whitsun Ales revived in more modest form but declined with industrialization and the resulting commercial imperatives which destroyed so much social cohesion and leisure time. The remnants of the Ales eventually evolved into the village church fêtes that carry on to this day in England. British and Empire schools often used Christian names for their terms. **Saint Andrews University** had Michaelmas, Candlemas and Whitsun terms until the 1990s, when they changed to semesters; the **University of Glasgow** still calls its Spring term Whitsun Term.