

The Blessing of the Bicycles



Feast Day of Saint Madern
Saturday May 17, 2014
Red Wing, Minnesota

The Blessing of the Bicycles **By the Quicker Vicar, Matthew Cole**

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, let our cotter pins remain without blemish, 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.
(Vicar sprinkles congregation with water from the Holy Water Bottle)

All: Amen

The Reading & the Ten Speed Commandments

This is the book of the generations. The first bicycle was a single speed, Godspeed, but after that it got complicated. Sprockets begat sprockets and cables begat kinks. Celerifere begat Draisienne begat Macmillan begat Michaux begat Ariel begat Bayliss Thomas begat Lawson begat Rover begat Boneshaker begat Ordinary begat Raleigh.

And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth in a critical mass, God saw that the wickedness of man was great and he did not like to yield unto anyone on the road not even his mother, so He directed Noah (played by Russell Crowe) to build an ark made of gopher wood and he said unto Noah, of every riding thing of all types, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark; they shall be regular and mixte.

There went in unto Noah into the ark two by two every type of bicycle: one to ride and one for spare parts. And Noah gathered two touring bikes and two mountain bikes; two recumbents and two tandems; two road racing bikes and two cross bikes; two BMX bikes and two three speeds; also four unicycles, just in case there was a misunderstanding, and a brace of Bromptons, as their folded countenance didst pleaseth Him. And God said there might be some strong winds in the Southeast. And it rained for forty days and forty nights, then drizzled for another fortnight, and the ark went upon the face of the waters.

And God remembered Noah, and every cycling thing, and assuaged the waters; the fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained. And it came to pass that Noah opened a door on the ark and set loose Japheth on a unicycle, and God said, Behold, this is a solemn covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature: that a man on a unicycle is a hilarious sight. Also, the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh and I will not again curse the ground for man's sake; man himself can curse it as he creepeth upon the face of the Bay City Hill.

A bit later, God spake unto Moses, saying, Here are a few ground rules, I hath numbered them for thy convenience:

- I. Thou shalt hold no other races above the Tour de France.
- II. Thou shalt not make unto thee helments which cost more than \$150.
- III. Thou shalt not take My name in vain everytime thou gettest a flat tyre.
- IV. Remember to anoint thy chain with oil, that in silence may it suffer.
- V. Honour the crosswalk and those walking upon the face of it.

- VI. Thou shalt not ignore other road users, nor cycle recklessly upon the sidewalk.
- VII. Thou shalt not stealeth bicycles.
- VIII. Thou shalt not kill, except bicycle thieves.
- IX. Thou shalt not runneth red lights, nor Stop signs, unless nobody is around.
- X. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor his Rudge, nor his Higgins, nor his Dunelt, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

And finally, forgetteth not the Titanium Rule: Signal unto others as thou wouldst have others signal unto thou.

All: Amen

The Gloating

(Said together by All)

Cyclists everywhere now a-bed
Shall think themselves accursed they were not here
And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks
That rode with us upon the Three Speed Tour

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

Please join in singing:



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 - tie - 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 _____



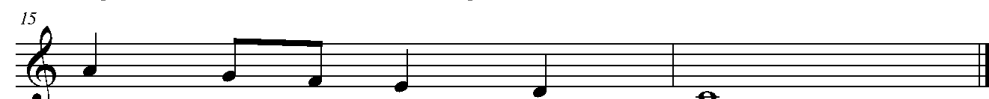
ride they _____ loved and knew. _____ One's name was Noel and an -
 whole of the two days long. And _____ one was a sai - lor and
 love to ride Bri - tish steel. You can meet them in pubs, or in



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 - tie - 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 Mississippi,
 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: 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: I lift up mine eyes unto the hills;
Congregation: from whence cometh my help?
(*Psalms 121*)
- Vicar: Lord, teach thy ways unto the wicked:
Congregation: and sinners shall be converted unto Thee.
(*Psalms 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

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Service adapted by Matthew Cole, the Quicker Vicar, 2014.
Reading adapted by Matthew Cole from "The Cyclist's Apocrypha"

Notes on Today's Service

Today is the feast day of the obscure Saint Madern, who lived and died in a hermitage near Lands End in Cornwall. He is the patron saint of the diocese of St. Malo in Brittany and also has a well named after him in England purported to have healing powers. The tale is told of 28 year-old John Trelille who, at 12, ran off with the ball at a game of football and was struck in the back by an angry girl, crippling him. For 16 years he was forced to go creeping on the ground, walking on his hands, until he bathed in the well and slept next to it, and regained his ability to walk and became strong, joined the King's Army and then was slain at Lyme in Dorset in 1644; I guess there were limits to the well's powers. The well is said to be venerated still in the Celtic tradition but my understanding of Celtic Christianity comes mostly from watching *Father Ted*. The reading is based on Genesis chapters 6 to 9, in which God floods the world and kills everyone except Noah and his family and a couple of individuals of each animal species, including mosquitoes, deer ticks and fleas, all of which we could have done without thank you very much. Noah is also mentioned as the first husbandman and the inventor of wine so I'm glad he made it! Noah gets a whole chapter in the Qur'an as well, where he is regarded as a prophet and messenger although that version says 72 others survived as well, providing a slightly larger gene pool for all of mankind. The reading was adapted from *The Cyclist's Apocrypha* which appeared in Britain's *Cycling Plus* in January 2001 but it's a bit vague as to who the actual author is. The hymn "I Sing a Song of the Chaps on Bikes" is an adaptation of "I Sing a Song of the Saints of God" by Lesbia Scott, the wife of a Royal Navy officer who wrote the song for her own children. May 17 happens to be a notable date in English history for a couple of other reasons; on this day in 1536 the marriage of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn was annulled the same day that Anne's brother George was beheaded for treason. Anne herself would last just two more days. Henry was angry that she bore no male issue even though she was mother to Queen Elizabeth I and he'd get through four more wives before he died himself. In 1943 this was the date of the Dambuster raid in which RAF Lancasters with special bombs attacked and badly damaged several dams in Germany, an operation marked by technical brilliance, remarkable bravery and 40% casualties. 617 Squadron, who carried out this raid, was kept intact afterwards for special missions and adopted the motto "Après moi, le deluge" (after me, the flood) which fits in with today's reading from Genesis.