

The Blessing of the Bicycles

*Wherever two or three speeds are gathered in my name,
there shall I be also*



The Feast of Ascension
Saturday May 12, 2018
Red Wing, Minnesota

The Blessing of the Bicycles

By the Quicker Vicar, Matthew Cole

Collect & Blessing

Vicar: Dearly beloved, I humbly pray and beseech you as many as are here present to accompany me with a glorious thirst and some ready cash unto the taverns of Wisconsin and grant further that we may hereafter lead a goodly, riotous and inebriate life to the glory of thy most perfect ride.

Congregation: Hear, hear!

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 punctures, 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. This we ask not for others' sake but for ourselves.

Congregation: 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 Minnesota golden 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 every time 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.

Vicar: Here endeth the reading

Congregation: Thank God!

The Hymn

Amazing Gears

New Britain
from the Virginia Harmony, 1831

A musical score for the hymn 'Amazing Gears' in 3/4 time, featuring a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The score consists of three staves of music with lyrics underneath. The lyrics are: 'A - maz - ing Gears, how sweet the sound as - / As we ride up Bay Ci - ty Hill, as - / Help us O Lord to be - come good. But / they tick a - long in third; And it is just a - bout the / cend - ing Lord, t'ward thee; We wish that we all had more / please Lord not too soon. There's man - y a bar 'fore / sweet - est - sound that I have ev - er heard. / low - wer gears than just these blood - y three. / Wa - ba - sha, and cock - tails start at noon!

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
Coffeeshop:
thou anointest my chain with oil;

Congregation: now my chaincase runneth over.

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

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

Dismissal

Vicar: Lord, teach thy ways unto the wicked:

Congregation: and sinners shall be converted unto Thee.
(Psalm 51 if you squint a bit)

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: 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, 2018.

What Would Jesus Ride?



A snippet of a medieval German woodcut (c. 1540) displayed in the Martin Luther exhibit at the Minneapolis Institute of Art in early 2017.

Dogs haven't changed much. Men either

The Feast of the Ascension celebrates the day the newly-revived Jesus ascended into heaven, and has been celebrated since the 4th century. It's supposed to be celebrated on Thursday but many churches have quietly moved it to Sunday so people will show up. In England it was common to 'beat the bounds', where the congregation would walk around the parish boundaries and marking boundary stones with chalk and hitting them with sticks. We could use our pumps! In some parishes, it was traditional to hit the young boys of the parish rather than the stones. It was important to know the parish boundaries because churches had certain duties like caring for children born out of wedlock in the parish. In Florence they have more fun; they have a dove slide down a string from the high altar of the cathedral to ignite a large decorative container filled with fireworks in front of the main entrance. This sounds like some kick-ass church! I am having ideas for next year!