



RESURRECTION UNIVERSITY CATHOLIC PARISH LAND STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE PERAMBULATE

FRESH LEAF

PERAMBULATE Perambulate was a term used in early Anglo-Saxon time and referred to the process whereby the lord of the land (baron, duke, king) would parade around the perimeter of the land owned in great ceremony with heraldry, flying hawks, hunting, feasting, trumpets sounding, drums beating, and revelry. In this manner the owners asserted their claim and authority, and the peasantry acknowledged to whom they owed fidelity.

Bishops came to use the process when blessing the boundaries of the church parish. In the early era there were no road boundaries so perambulation was a method of defining the boundaries of a claim. The process had to be public and obvious so that adjacent owners could see and approve of your claim. If there was a disagreement, it would be settled at the time by rock or tree markers adjusted or placed. The Elizabethan "Exhortation" for "Perambulation in Rogation Week" stated that it was charitable to maintain one's property rights and boundaries; it pronounced the Scriptural curse of Moses on those who moved boundary markers and cheated their neighbors in lawsuits;

it also mourned that neighbors would "fall out into immortal hatred among ourselves, for so brittle possessions".

Pastor George Herbert in his work *Country Parson* examined judicial matters throughout his pastoral life. He became quite well noted for this practice. A curious but significant way in which Herbert demonstrated his concern for justice in the parish was in his leading of the annual Rogation tide procession. In his writing, "The Parson's Condescending", Herbert applauds the traditional ceremony of "beating of the bounds". Among the benefits of the perambulation that Herbert lists is:

1. Justice in the Preservation of bounds,
2. A public display or agreement to right order,
3. An opportunity to quiet the people and call them to peace.

In a community procession before the springtime feast of the Ascension, the parson and parish old-timers would lead the rest of their neighbors around the boundaries of the parish. This village parade provided the community with a "mental map of the parish" that could be drawn upon in cases of property dispute. For his part, Herbert required upon threat of penalty that all his parishioners join the procession. As he said, "Those that withdraw would present their contrariness to the parish population for public scorn."

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Message From the Editor:

**"Woe unto them that join house to house,
that lay field to field, till there be no place,
that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth!"**

Isaiah 5:8



Smart man, that Herbert!

An analysis of the Rogationtide ceremonies shows it to be clearly rooted in the Bible and later strongly supported in the late medieval system of open fields and commons in which the distortion of manorial records, through the destruction or obscuring of the field boundaries, could threaten the social and economic stability of the entire manor." Yet by the early seventeenth century the open-fields systems was deteriorating with the division of manors and enclosure of commons and formerly tenanted land. City life became predominate and wood and stone fences became common. Robert Frost ridiculed this practice when he observed "...strong fences good neighbors make." A reading of the poem in its entirety reveals that the narrator was saddened by the decline of perambulating the borders and being able to talk with his neighbors.

And if you are observant, you can see the wolves of Yellowstone walk their territory and mark the boundaries of the pack claim—just keeping the peace.

There you have it! Perambulation: open and public, walk the boundaries.

Lenten Season is coming. It is a time to stroll through our hearts and minds and ask ourselves how we can perambulate and make public display of our beliefs, our yearning for peace, our individual and community call to right order and proper boundaries not in land but attitudes, charity, love, and coming to peace.

"No wonder the hills and groves were God's first temples, and the more they are cut down and hewn into cathedrals and churches, the farther off and dimmer seems the Lord himself. The same may be said of stone temples. Yonder, to the eastward of our camp grove, stands one of Nature's cathedrals, hewn from the living rock, almost conventional in form, about two thousand feet high, nobly adorned with spires and pinnacles, thrilling under floods of sunshine as if alive like a grove-temple, and well named 'Cathedral Peak.'" John Muir



A new ministry has come to Resurrection University Catholic Parish—the Land Stewardship Committee.

See us at hoechoka.com or under the LAND STEWARDSHIP tab at the parish web site.

For more information contact paulagore@att.com or 406-587-2001.

