

The 5th Week of Epiphany

THE COLLECT

"O Lord, we beseech thee to keep thy Church and household continually in thy true religion; that they who do lean only upon the hope of thy heavenly grace may evermore be defended by thy mighty power; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 14: ST. VALENTINES DAY

Love (III) by George Herbert

Love bade me welcome: yet my soul drew back,
Guilty of dust and sin.
But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack
From my first entrance in,
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning
If I lacked anything.

"A guest," I answered, "worthy to be here":
Love said, "You shall be he."
"I, the unkind, ungrateful? Ah, my dear,
I cannot look on thee."
Love took my hand, and smiling did reply,
"Who made the eyes but I?"

"Truth, Lord; but I have marred them; let my shame
Go where it doth deserve."
"And know you not," says Love, "who bore the blame?"
"My dear, then I will serve."
"You must sit down," says Love, "and taste my meat."
So I did sit and eat.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 15: BLESSED THOMAS BRAY

Born in 1656, Thomas Bray was educated at Oxford and was selected by the Bishop of London for the work of organizing the Church in the American colony of Maryland. While waiting through delays before his journey, he ended up organizing a free parochial library system. It was originally intended for American, but was also instituted in England. He then founded the "Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge." After his service in Maryland, he returned to England and also founded the "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. In 1730, he died on this day. Archdeacon W.H. Hutton, in *The Dictionary of English Church History*, writes of Bray: "He was a vigorous and humorous writer and a parish priest of exemplary devotion, and to no one in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries does the practical work of the English Church owe a greater debt."

