Office of Readings

Friday, February 23, 2046

Saint Polycarp, Bishop and Martyr

OPENING

O God, come to my assistance.

Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

INVITATORY

Ant. Come, let us adore Christ, who for our sake bore the cross and conquered death.

Come, let us exult in the Lord; let us shout with joy to God our salvation.

Let us come before his face with praise and exult in him with psalms.

For the Lord is a great God and a great king above all gods.

For the Lord does not cast off his people; for in his hand are all the ends of the earth.

And the heights of the mountains belong to him.

For the sea is his, and he made it; and his hands formed the dry land.

Come, let us adore and fall down before God; let us weep before the Lord who made us.

For he is the Lord our God; and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand.

Today, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

As in the provocation, according to the day of temptation in the wilderness,

where your fathers tempted me; they tried me and saw my works.

For forty years I was close to this generation, and I said: "They always err in heart."

And these people have not known my ways, so I swore in my wrath that they will not enter into my rest.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Ant. Come, let us adore Christ, who for our sake bore the cross and conquered death.

HYMN

Again We Keep This Solemn Fast

> Again we keep this solemn fast,
> a gift of faith from ages past,
> this Lent which binds us lovingly
> to faith and hope and charity.

PSALMODY

Psalm 58 *Rescue from Enemies*

> *Ant. My sacrifice is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you will not despise.*

Rescue me from my enemies, O my God, and protect me from those who rise up against me.

Rescue me from those who work iniquity, and save me from men of blood.

For behold they have caught my soul; the strong have rushed in upon me.

Neither is it my iniquity nor my sin, O Lord; without iniquity I have run and directed.

Rise up to meet me and see; and you, Lord God of hosts, the God of Israel.

Attend so as to visit all the Gentiles; do not spare any who work iniquity.

They will return in the evening and they will suffer hunger like dogs and will circle the city.

Behold, they will speak in their mouth, and a sword is on their lips.

"For who has heard us?"

But you, O Lord, will laugh at them; you will bring all the Gentiles to nothing.

I will keep my strength to you, for you, O God, are my support.

My God, his mercy will precede me.

God will let me see over my enemies; do not slay them, lest at some time my people forget.

Scatter them by your power and bring them down, O Lord, my shield.

The sin of their mouth, the word of their lips, and let them be caught in their pride.

And because of their cursing and lying, they will be proclaimed in consummation, in the wrath of consummation, and they will be no more.

And they will know that God will rule Jacob and all the ends of the earth.

They will return in the evening and will suffer hunger like dogs and will circle the city.

They will be dispersed to eat; but if they are not satisfied, they will murmur.

But I will sing your strength, and in the morning I will exult in your mercy.

For you have been my supporter and my refuge in the day of my tribulation.

You, my helper, I will sing to you; for you, O God, are my support, my God, my mercy.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

> *Ant. My sacrifice is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you will not despise.*

Psalm 59 *Prayer After Defeat*

> *Ant. My sacrifice is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you will not despise.*

O God, you have rejected us and have destroyed us; you have been angry and you have shown mercy to us.

You have moved the earth and troubled it; heal its wounds, for it has been moved.

You have shown your people harsh things; you have given us wine of sorrow to drink.

You have given a sign to those who fear you, so that they may flee from before the bow, so that your beloved may be rescued.

Save with your right hand and hear me, so that those whom you love may be rescued.

God has spoken in his holy place; I will rejoice, and I will divide Shechem, and I will measure out the valley of tents.

Gilead is mine and Manasseh is mine; and Ephraim is the strength of my head.

Judah is my king; Moab, the pot of my hope.

Into Edom I will extend my shoe; the foreigners have been made subject to me.

Who will lead me into the reinforced city? Who will lead me even into Edom?

Will it not be you, O God, who have rejected us and will you not, O God, go out in our armies?

Give us help from tribulation; for the salvation of man is useless.

Through God we will be strengthened; and he will bring our enemies to nothing.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

> *Ant. My sacrifice is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you will not despise.*

Psalm 60 *Confidence in God's Protection*

> *Ant. My sacrifice is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you will not despise.*

Hear, O God, my supplication; attend to my prayer.

I cried out to you from the ends of the earth, when my heart was in anguish; you have exalted me on a rock.

You have led me, for you have been my hope: a tower of strength against the face of the enemy.

I will dwell in your tabernacle forever; I will be covered under the cover of your wings.

For you, my God, have heard my prayer; you have given an inheritance to those who fear your name.

You will add days to the days of the king; his years will be even to the day of every generation.

He endures forever in the sight of God; who will seek the mercy and truth of him?

So I will sing a psalm to your name forever and ever, so that I may repay my vows from day to day.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

> *Ant. My sacrifice is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you will not despise.*

FIRST READING: SCRIPTURE

ISAIAH 44:22

I have swept away your transgressions like a cloud, and your sins like mist; return to me, for I have redeemed you.

RESPONSORY

V. Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love.
R. Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love.
V. According to the multitude of your tender mercies,
R. blot out my transgressions.

SECOND READING: PATRISTIC OR HAGIOGRAPHIC

Tertullian

On Prayer, Chapter 28

Prayer Joined with Fasting

> With prayer, fasting is joined. Fasting is the soul of prayer; mercy is the life of fasting. So if you pray, fast; if you fast, show mercy; if you want your petition to be heard, hear the petition of others. If you do not close your ear to others, God will not close his ear to you. Thus the holy writings teach us: fasting has value when joined to prayer; prayer has power when it rises from a fasting and merciful heart. This is the fast that God chooses, says Isaiah: loose the bonds of wickedness, undo the heavy burdens, let the oppressed go free, break every yoke, share your bread with the hungry, bring the poor who are cast out to your house, cover the naked. This fast is not merely going without food; it is a turning of the whole life toward God and toward the neighbor. The exterior act of fasting is only the outward sign of an interior conversion of heart.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

God of mercy, may the words of scripture and the wisdom of the fathers strengthen our Lenten journey and lead us toward a holy Easter; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

DISMISSAL

Let us praise the Lord.
And give him thanks.