Office of Readings

Thursday, December 4, 2003

Saint John of Damascus, Priest and Doctor

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 the Lord who is coming to bring salvation to his people.

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 the Lord who is coming to bring salvation to his people.

HYMN

The King Shall Come

> The King shall come when morning dawns
> and light triumphant breaks,
> when beauty gilds the eastern hills
> and life to joy awakes.

PSALMODY

Psalm 13 *The Fool Who Denies God*

> *Ant. Behold, the Lord is coming with power; he will illuminate what is hidden in darkness.*

The fool has said in his heart: "There is no God." They are corrupt and have become abominable in their ways; there is no one who does good, not even one.

The Lord has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men, to see if there is anyone who understands or seeks God.

They have all turned aside; together they have become useless; there is no one who does good, not even one.

Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have acted deceitfully; the poison of asps is under their lips.

Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood.

Destruction and misery are in their ways, and the way of peace they have not known; there is no fear of God before their eyes.

Will all those who work iniquity not come to know it? They consume my people like food.

They have not called upon the Lord; therefore they trembled there with fear, where there was no fear.

For the Lord is in the just generation; you have confounded the counsel of the poor man, because the Lord is his hope.

Who will give from Zion the salvation of Israel? When the Lord will have brought back the captivity of his people, Jacob will rejoice, and Israel will be glad.

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. Behold, the Lord is coming with power; he will illuminate what is hidden in darkness.*

Psalm 14 *The Guest of God*

> *Ant. Behold, the Lord is coming with power; he will illuminate what is hidden in darkness.*

O Lord, who will dwell in your tabernacle? Or who will rest in your holy mountain?

He who enters without blemish and who works justice.

He who speaks truth in his heart, who has not acted deceitfully with his tongue, nor has done evil to his neighbor, nor has accepted a reproach against his neighbors.

In his sight the malign is brought to nothing, but he glorifies those who fear the Lord.

He who swears to his neighbor and does not deceive him;

he who has not given his money out at interest, and has not accepted bribes against the innocent.

Whoever does these things will not be moved forever.

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. Behold, the Lord is coming with power; he will illuminate what is hidden in darkness.*

Psalm 15 *God Is My Inheritance*

> *Ant. Behold, the Lord is coming with power; he will illuminate what is hidden in darkness.*

Preserve me, O Lord, for I have hoped in you.

I have said to the Lord: "You are my God, for you have no need of my good things."

But for the saints who are in his land, he has made all my desires wonderful in them.

Their infirmities have been multiplied; afterward they hastened.

I will not gather together their convocations of blood, nor will I be mindful of their names through my lips.

The Lord is the portion of my inheritance and my cup; it is you who will restore my inheritance to me.

The boundaries have fallen to me in excellent places; for my inheritance is excellent to me.

I will bless the Lord who has given me understanding; moreover my reins have also corrected me, even until night.

I had foresight of the Lord in my sight always; for he is at my right hand, so that I will not be moved.

Because of this, my heart has rejoiced, and my tongue has exulted, and moreover, my flesh will rest in hope.

For you will not abandon my soul to hell, nor will you allow your holy one to see corruption.

You have made known to me the ways of life; you will fill me with joy with your face; at your right hand are delights even to the end.

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. Behold, the Lord is coming with power; he will illuminate what is hidden in darkness.*

FIRST READING: SCRIPTURE

ISAIAH 7:14

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Emmanuel.

RESPONSORY

V. Come, Lord Jesus, do not delay.
R. Come, Lord Jesus, do not delay.
V. Give new courage to your people,
R. who trust in your word.

SECOND READING: PATRISTIC OR HAGIOGRAPHIC

Saint Augustine of Hippo
Sermon 4 on Advent

The Prophet and the Advent

> Arise, Jerusalem, stand upon the heights, and look toward the east, and see your children gathered from the rising to the setting sun. Thus spoke the prophet in the name of this very city whose children were gathered from the sunrise and the sunset. In those days, that is, in the time of the prophets, the mystery of Christ had not yet been revealed to the nations; it was concealed within the veil of the people of Israel. And so it was necessary for the prophets to speak, pointing with a kind of finger to the One who was to come, so that when he came, he might be recognized. The prophets prepared the way of the Lord in the hearts of the people; John the Baptist prepared his way in the words of announcement; and we, the preachers who come after, prepare his way in the hearts of those who hear us. Let us make ourselves a holy road for him. Let us prepare ourselves through conversion of life, through acts of mercy, through the love of God and neighbor. His way is ready when we are ready to receive him.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

Lord, in this Office of Readings deepen our longing for your Son and our readiness to welcome him at Christmas and at the end of time; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

DISMISSAL

Let us praise the Lord.
And give him thanks.