Office of Readings

Saturday, December 6, 2003

Saint Nicholas of Myra, Bishop

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 19 *Prayer for the King*

> *Ant. Your light will dawn, O Lord, and your glory will be seen upon us.*

May the Lord hear you in the day of tribulation; may the name of the God of Jacob protect you.

May he send you help from the sanctuary, and may he defend you from Zion.

May he be mindful of all your sacrifices, and may your burnt offering become fruitful.

May he give to you according to your own heart, and confirm all your counsel.

We will rejoice in your salvation; and we will be magnified in the name of our God.

May the Lord fulfill all your petitions; now I know that the Lord has saved his Christ.

He will hear him from his holy heaven; the salvation of his right hand is in power.

Some approach in chariots and some on horses, but we will call upon the name of the Lord our God.

They have been bound and have fallen; but we have risen and have been set upright.

O Lord, save the king, and hear us in the day that we will call upon you.

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. Your light will dawn, O Lord, and your glory will be seen upon us.*

Psalm 20 *Thanksgiving for Victory*

> *Ant. Your light will dawn, O Lord, and your glory will be seen upon us.*

O Lord, the king will rejoice in your strength, and in your salvation he will exult greatly.

You have given him his heart's desire, and you have not withheld the will of his lips.

For you have anticipated him with sweet blessings; you have placed a crown of precious stones on his head.

He asked life from you, and you gave him a length of days forever and ever.

His glory is great in your salvation; glory and great beauty you will place upon him.

For you will give him to be a blessing forever and ever; you will gladden him in joy with your face.

For the king hopes in the Lord, and through the mercy of the Most High, he will not be moved.

Let your hand be found by all your enemies; let your right hand find all who hate you.

You will make them like a fiery oven in the time of your countenance; the Lord will trouble them in his wrath, and fire will devour them.

You will destroy their fruit from the earth and their seed from among the sons of men.

For they have extended evils against you; they have devised a plan which they were not able to establish.

For you will make them turn their back; among your remnants you will prepare their face.

Be exalted, O Lord, in your strength; we will sing and praise your power.

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. Your light will dawn, O Lord, and your glory will be seen upon us.*

Psalm 21 *My God, Why Have You Forsaken Me?*

> *Ant. Your light will dawn, O Lord, and your glory will be seen upon us.*

O God, my God, look upon me; why have you forsaken me? Far from my salvation are the words of my sins.

O my God, I will cry out by day, and you will not hear; and by night, and it will not be foolishness in me.

But you dwell in the sanctuary, the praise of Israel.

In you our fathers hoped; they hoped and you delivered them.

They cried out to you and were saved; they hoped in you and were not confounded.

But I am a worm and not a man; the reproach of men and the outcast of the people.

All who saw me ridiculed me; they spoke with their lips and wagged their heads.

"He hoped in the Lord; let him rescue him; let him save him, since he wants him."

For you have drawn me out from the womb; you are my hope from the breasts of my mother.

I was cast upon you from the womb; from the womb of my mother, you are my God.

Do not depart from me, for tribulation is near, for there is none to help me.

Many calves have surrounded me; fat bulls have besieged me.

They have opened their mouths against me like a lion seizing prey and roaring.

I have been poured out like water, and all my bones have been scattered.

My heart has become like wax, melting in the midst of my bowels.

My strength has dried up like a clay pot, and my tongue has cleaved to my jaws, and you have led me down into the dust of death.

For many dogs have surrounded me; the assembly of the wicked has besieged me.

They have dug my hands and feet; they have numbered all my bones.

And they themselves have looked upon me and stared at me.

They divided my garments among them, and over my clothing they cast lots.

But you, O Lord, do not take your help far from me; attend to my defense.

O God, rescue my soul from the sword, and my only life from the power of the dog.

Save me from the mouth of the lion, and my humility from the horns of the rhinoceros.

I will declare your name to my brothers; in the midst of the church I will praise you.

You who fear the Lord, praise him; all the seed of Jacob, glorify him.

Let all the seed of Israel fear him, because he has not spurned or scorned the supplication of the poor man.

Neither has he turned away his face from me, and when I cried out to him, he heard me.

My praise is with you in the great church; I will pay my vows in the sight of those who fear him.

The poor will eat and will be satisfied, and those who seek the Lord will praise him; their hearts will live forever and ever.

All the ends of the earth will remember and will return to the Lord.

And all the families of the nations will adore in his sight.

For the kingdom is the Lord's and he will rule the nations.

All the fat ones of the earth have eaten and adored; all who descend into the earth will fall before him.

And my soul will live for him, and my seed will serve him.

The generation to come will be announced to the Lord, and the heavens will proclaim his justice to the people who will be born, whom the Lord has made.

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. Your light will dawn, O Lord, and your glory will be seen upon us.*

FIRST READING: SCRIPTURE

ISAIAH 35:1-2

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing.

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 Andrew of Crete

Sermon on the Nativity

The Mystery Hidden from Ages

> Come then, let us observe the Feast. Truly wondrous is the whole chronicle of the Nativity. For this day the ancient slavery is ended, the devil confounded, the demons take to flight, the power of death is broken, paradise is unlocked, the curse is taken away, sin is removed from us, error driven out, truth has been brought back, the speech of kindliness diffused, and spreads on every side, a heavenly way of life has been introduced into the earth, angels communicate with men without fear, and men now hold speech with angels. Why is this? Because God is now on earth, and man in heaven; on every side all things are come together. The mystery that was hidden from ages and from generations, now made manifest to his saints, was revealed to us. The Godhead appeared in the flesh; the mortal has put on immortality; the temporal has put on the eternal. Let then

> the whole creation shout for joy, for the Savior has been born among us. Honor and glory be to God who is over all, from whom and through whom and in whom are all things, to whom be praise and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

TE DEUM

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CONCLUDING PRAYER

O God, the church prepares for Christmas through prayer and reading of your word. May our prayer today draw us closer to the mystery we are about to celebrate; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

DISMISSAL

Let us praise the Lord.
And give him thanks.