Office of Readings

Thursday, December 18, 2003

Advent, Week 3 — Thursday

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 55 *In God I Trust*

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

Have mercy on me, O God, for man has trampled on me; all day long he has afflicted me, fighting against me.

My enemies have trampled on me all day long; for many who fight against me are from on high.

In the day when I am afraid, I will hope in you.

In God I will praise my words; in God I have hoped, I will not fear what flesh can do to me.

All day long they have detested my words; all their thoughts are against me for evil.

They will dwell and hide themselves; they will watch my heel, just as they waited for my soul.

For nothing, you will save them; in your anger you will break the peoples, O God.

I have announced my life to you; you have set my tears in your sight, as also in your promise.

Then my enemies will be turned back, on whatever day I will call upon you.

Behold, I know that you are my God.

In God I will praise the word; in the Lord I will praise his speech.

In God I have hoped; I will not fear what man can do to me.

In me, O God, are the vows you will receive; I will render praises to you.

For you have rescued my soul from death, and my feet from falling, so that I may be pleasing before God in the light of the living.

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 56 *Steadfast Trust in God*

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

Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me; for my soul trusts in you.

And in the shadow of your wings I will hope, until iniquity passes by.

I will cry out to the most high God, the God who has benefited me.

He has sent from heaven and rescued me; he gave over to reproach those who trampled on me.

God has sent his mercy and his truth, and he has rescued my soul from the midst of the lion cubs.

I have slept troubled; the sons of men, their teeth are weapons and arrows, and their tongue is a sharp sword.

Be exalted, O God, above the heavens, and your glory above all the earth.

They have prepared a snare for my feet, and they have bowed down my soul.

They have dug a pit before my face, and they fell into it.

My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready; I will sing and compose a psalm.

Arise, my glory; arise, psaltery and harp; I will arise in the early morning.

I will confess to you among the peoples, O Lord, and I will compose a psalm to you among the nations.

For your mercy has been magnified, even to the heavens, and your truth even to the clouds.

Be exalted, O God, above the heavens, and your glory above all the earth.

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 57 *Rescue from the Wicked*

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

If truly you speak justice, judge what is right, O sons of men.

For in your heart you work iniquity on the earth; your hands weave injustices.

The wicked have become estranged from the womb; they have wandered astray from the womb; they have spoken false things.

Their fury is like that of a serpent; like that of a deaf asp, stopping up its ears.

Which will not hear the voice of the enchanters, nor of the wizard casting spells wisely.

God will crush their teeth in their mouth; the Lord will break the molars of the lions.

They will come to nothing, like water flowing away; he has bent his bow until they are weakened.

Like wax that is melted, they will be taken away; fire has fallen upon them, and they will not see the sun.

Before your thorns could perceive the bramble, he swallows them up as if alive, as if in wrath.

The just will rejoice when he has seen the retribution, he will wash his hands in the blood of the sinner.

And a man will say: "Truly there is a fruit to the just one; truly there is a God judging them on the earth."

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.