Office of Readings

Sunday, December 21, 2003

4th Sunday of Advent

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 to come.

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 to come.

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 64 *God's Care for the Earth*

> *Ant. The Spirit and the Bride say: Come, Lord Jesus, come.*

A hymn befits you, O God, in Zion; and a vow will be repaid to you in Jerusalem.

Hear my prayer; all flesh will come to you.

Words of the wicked have prevailed over us; but you will be merciful toward our impieties.

Blessed is he whom you have chosen and received; he will dwell in your courts.

We will be filled with the good things of your house; holy is your temple,

wonderful in justice. Hear us, O God our Savior, the hope of all the ends of the earth, and of those far out at sea.

You who prepare the mountains by your strength, being girded with power;

who troubles the depth of the sea, the noise of its waves.

The Gentiles will be troubled, and those who inhabit the ends of the earth will be afraid at your signs.

You will make joyful the outgoings of the morning and evening.

You have visited the earth and saturated it; you have enriched it greatly.

The river of God has been replenished with water; you have prepared their food, for this is its preparation.

Saturate its furrows; multiply its fruits; the earth is glad as it springs up and is watered.

You will bless the crown of the year of your goodness, and your fields will be filled with plenty.

The beautiful places of the wilderness will grow fat, and the hills will be girded with exultation.

The rams of the flock are clothed, and the valleys will abound with grain; they will cry out, yes, they will even sing a hymn.

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. The Spirit and the Bride say: Come, Lord Jesus, come.*

Psalm 65 *Come and See What God Has Done*

> *Ant. The Spirit and the Bride say: Come, Lord Jesus, come.*

Shout with joy to God, all the earth; sing a psalm to his name; give glory to his praise.

Say to God: "How awesome are your works, O Lord! In the multitude of your power your enemies will lie to you."

Let all the earth adore you and sing a psalm to you; let it sing a psalm to your name.

Come and see the works of God; he is formidable in his designs on the sons of men.

He turns the sea into dry land; in the river they will cross on foot; there we will rejoice in him.

He rules in his power forever; his eyes watch over the nations.

Let the rebellious not be exalted in themselves.

Bless our God, you Gentiles, and make the voice of his praise be heard;

who has set my soul in life, and has not given my feet into stirring.

For you have proved us, O God; you have tried us by fire, just as silver is tested.

You led us into a snare; you placed afflictions on our back.

You set men over our heads; we passed through fire and water; and you brought us out into refreshment.

I will enter into your house with burnt offerings; I will repay you my vows

which my lips distinguished and my mouth spoke in my tribulation.

I will offer to you burnt offerings full of marrow, with the burning of rams.

I will offer to you bulls and he-goats.

Come, hear, and I will tell you, all who fear God, what great things he has done for my soul.

I cried out to him with my mouth, and I extolled him with my tongue.

If I have looked upon iniquity in my heart, let the Lord not hear me.

Therefore, God has heard me and has attended to the voice of my supplication.

Blessed is God, who has not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from 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.

> *Ant. The Spirit and the Bride say: Come, Lord Jesus, come.*

Psalm 66 *May the Nations Praise God*

> *Ant. The Spirit and the Bride say: Come, Lord Jesus, come.*

May God have mercy on us and bless us; may he cause the light of his face to shine upon us, and may he have mercy on us.

So that we may know your way on earth, your salvation in all nations.

Let the peoples confess to you, O God; let all peoples give praise to you.

Let the nations rejoice and exult, for you judge the peoples with equity and direct the nations on the earth.

Let the peoples confess to you, O God; let all peoples give praise to you.

The earth has yielded its fruit.

May God, our God, bless us; may God bless us, and all the ends of the earth fear him.

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. The Spirit and the Bride say: Come, Lord Jesus, come.*

FIRST READING: SCRIPTURE

LUKE 1:26-28

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you."

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

Blessed John Henry Newman

Meditations and Devotions

Waiting for Christ

> Christ is already in that place of peace, which is all in all. He is on the right hand of God. He is hidden in the brightness of the radiance which issues from the everlasting throne. He is in the very abyss of peace, where there is no voice of tumult or distress, but a deep stillness — stillness, that greatest and most awful of all goods

> which we can fancy — that most perfect of joys, the utter profound, ineffable tranquility of the divine essence. He has entered into his rest. That is our home; here we are on a pilgrimage, and Christ is calling us home. He calls us to meet him. We know that he is there, and we know that we have to follow him — that all are to go one way or another. Let us try to make a beginning now of what will one day be our perfect work. Every moment of our life we are coming closer to him. Let each Advent find us further on the road than the one before.

TE DEUM

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CONCLUDING PRAYER

Lord, grant us through this Office of Readings a heart like Mary's, open to receive your word and ready to act upon it; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

DISMISSAL

Let us praise the Lord.
And give him thanks.