Morning Prayer

Thursday, December 25, 2003

The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)

OPENING

O God, come to my assistance.

Lord, make haste to help me.

Lord, open my lips.

And my mouth will proclaim your praise.

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.

HYMN

O Come, All Faithful

O come, all faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord;
born this happy morning, O come and adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

God of God, Light of Light,
he abhors not the Virgin's womb;
very God, begotten not created:
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
sing, all you citizens of heaven above;
glory to God in the highest:
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be glory given;
word of the Father, now in flesh appearing:
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

Psalm 143 *Blessed Be the Lord My Rock (Part I)*

> *Ant. Today Christ is born for us; glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will.*

Blessed is the Lord my God, who trains my hands for the contest and my fingers for the war.

My mercy and my refuge; my support and my deliverer; my protector and the one in whom I have hoped, who subdues my people under me.

Lord, what is man, that you have made yourself known to him? Or the son of man, that you think about him?

Man has been made like vanity; his days pass away like a shadow.

Lord, bow your heavens and descend; touch the mountains and they will smoke.

Cast lightning and scatter them; send out your arrows and set them in disorder.

Send your hand from on high; free me and rescue me from many waters, from the hand of foreign sons.

Their mouth has spoken vanity, and their right hand is the right hand of iniquity.

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. Today Christ is born for us; glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will.*

Psalm 147 *Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem (Part II)*

> *Ant. Today Christ is born for us; glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will.*

Who sends his crystal like morsels; before the face of his cold, who will endure?

He will send out his word and will melt them; his wind will blow and the waters will flow.

Who announces his word to Jacob, his justices and his judgments to Israel.

He has not done in this way for every nation, and his judgments he has not made manifest to them.

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. Today Christ is born for us; glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will.*

OLD TESTAMENT CANTICLE

OLD TESTAMENT CANTICLE (ISAIAH 64:1–8)

O that you would rend the heavens and would come down; the mountains would melt away before your face.

As when fire burns the wood and the fire boils water, to make your name known to your enemies.

You have done terrible things which we did not look for; you came down and the mountains trembled before your face.

From of old, men have not heard nor perceived with the ears.

The eye has not seen, O God, besides you, what things you have prepared for those who wait for you.

You have met those who rejoice and do justice; in your ways they will remember you.

Behold, you are angry and we have sinned; in them we have been always, and we will be saved.

And we all have become as one unclean, and all our justices as the rag of a menstruous woman.

And we have all fallen as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

There is none that calls upon your name; that rises up and takes hold of you.

You have hidden your face from us, and you have crushed us by the hand of our iniquity.

And now, O Lord, you are our father; and we are clay. And you are our maker, and we all are the works of your hands.

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.

SHORT READING

GALATIANS 4:4–5

> But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to ransom those under the law, so that we might receive adoption.

RESPONSORY

V. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us,

R. and we have seen his glory.

V. Full of grace and truth,

R. we have seen his glory.

GOSPEL CANTICLE: BENEDICTUS (LUKE 1:68-79)

THE CANTICLE OF ZECHARIAH (BENEDICTUS) (LUKE 1:68–79)

> *Ant. Today Christ is born; today the Savior has appeared; today the angels are singing on earth.*

Blessed is the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has visited and accomplished the redemption of his people.

And he has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of David his servant.

As he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets, those who have been from the beginning:

Salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us.

To show mercy to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant,

the oath which he swore to our father Abraham, that he would grant to us,

that being freed from the hand of our enemies, we might serve him without fear,

in holiness and justice before him, throughout all our days.

And you, child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the face of the Lord, to prepare his ways.

To give knowledge of salvation to his people, for the remission of their sins,

through the compassionate mercy of our God, by which the Rising Sun has visited us from on high,

to illuminate those sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death, to direct our feet in the way of peace.

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. Today Christ is born; today the Savior has appeared; today the angels are singing on earth.*

MORNING INTERCESSIONS

Rejoicing in the birth of Christ our Savior, let us offer our prayers, saying:

For peace in the world, that the Prince of Peace may reign in every heart and in every nation: we pray to you, O Lord. — *Glory to God in the highest.*

For children and families, especially those experiencing poverty, that they may know the warmth and security that the Holy Family sought: we pray to you, O Lord. — *Glory to God in the highest.*

For refugees and those far from home, that they may find welcome and shelter: we pray to you, O Lord. — *Glory to God in the highest.*

For our parish and our bishop, that the joy of Christmas may deepen our life together in faith: we pray to you, O Lord. — *Glory to God in the highest.*

For those for whom Christmas is a time of grief or loneliness, that your comfort may surround them: we pray to you, O Lord. — *Glory to God in the highest.*

For a spirit of generosity in this season, that we may share our gifts as God has shared the greatest gift: we pray to you, O Lord.

Glory to God in the highest.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Let us pray as the Lord himself has taught us:

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

God of all glory, your Son was born in a manger and laid in poverty so that we might be rich in your grace. Grant that we may show our gratitude by lives given in service to you and to others; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

DISMISSAL

The Lord be with you.
And with your spirit.

May almighty God bless us: the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God.