Morning Prayer

Friday, December 26, 2003

Saint Stephen, the First Martyr

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 51 *Have Mercy on Me, O God*

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

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your great mercy.

And according to the multitude of your compassions, wipe away my iniquity.

Wash me yet more from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

For I know my iniquity, and my sin is always before me.

Against you alone have I sinned, and I have done evil before you.

And so you are justified in your words, and you will prevail when you are judged.

For behold, I was conceived in iniquities, and in sin my mother conceived me.

For behold, you have loved truth; the unknown and secret things of your wisdom you have made clear to me.

You will sprinkle me with hyssop, and I will be cleansed; you will wash me, and I will be made whiter than snow.

To my hearing you will give joy and gladness, and the humbled bones will rejoice.

Turn your face away from my sins, and wipe away all my iniquities.

Create a clean heart in me, O God, and renew a right spirit within my inmost being.

Cast me not away from your face, and take not your holy spirit from me.

Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and strengthen me with a princely spirit.

I will teach the unjust your ways, and the impious will be converted to you.

Rescue me from blood, O God, the God of my salvation, and my tongue will extol your justice.

O Lord, you will open my lips, and my mouth will proclaim your praise.

For if you had wanted sacrifice, I would certainly have given it; but with burnt offerings you will not be delighted.

A sacrifice to God is a broken spirit; a contrite and humbled heart, O God, you will not despise.

Deal kindly, O Lord, in your good will with Zion, so that the walls of Jerusalem may be built up.

Then you will accept the sacrifice of justice, oblations and burnt offerings; then they will lay calves upon your altar.

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 142 *Hear My Prayer, O Lord*

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

Hear, O Lord, my prayer; give ear to my petition in your truth.

Hear me in your justice, and do not enter into judgment with your servant.

For no living person will be justified in your sight.

For the enemy has persecuted my soul; he has humbled my life to the earth.

He has placed me in the dark, like those who are dead for eternity.

And my spirit has been in anguish within me; my heart within me has been disturbed.

I was mindful of the days of old; I meditated on all your works; I meditated on the deeds of your hands.

I stretched out my hands to you; my soul is like land without water to you.

Quickly hear me, O Lord; my spirit has fainted away.

Do not turn your face away from me, lest I be like those who descend into the pit.

Make your mercy heard to me in the morning, for I have hoped in you.

Make known to me the way on which I should walk, for I have lifted up my soul to you.

Rescue me from my enemies, O Lord; to you I have run.

Teach me to do your will, for you are my God.

Your good spirit will lead me into the right land; for the sake of your name, O Lord, you will enliven me in your equity.

You will lead my soul out of tribulation, and in your mercy you will scatter my enemies.

And you will destroy all those who afflict my soul, for I am your servant.

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 (PROVERBS 8:22–31)

The Lord possessed me at the beginning of his ways, before he made anything from the beginning.

I was set up from eternity, and from of old, before the earth was made.

The depths were not yet, and I was already conceived; neither had the fountains of waters as yet sprung out.

The mountains, with their huge mass, had not yet been established; before the hills, I was brought forth.

He had not yet made the earth, nor the rivers, nor the poles of the world.

When he prepared the heavens, I was present; when he enclosed the depths within certain limits.

When he established the sky above, and poised the fountains of waters.

When he surrounded the sea with its bounds, and set a law for the waters, that they should not pass their limits.

When he balanced the foundations of the earth, I was with him, forming all things.

And I was delighted every day, playing before him at all times, playing in the world.

And my delights were to be with the children of men.

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

TITUS 3:4–5

> When the kindness and generous love of God our Savior appeared, not because of any righteous deeds we had done but because of his mercy, he saved us.

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

Lord, you who are the Word made flesh, fill our words with grace and our actions with love, so that in all things we may bear witness to your presence among us; who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. 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.