Office of Readings

Wednesday, December 31, 2003

Saint Sylvester I, Pope

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. Christ the Savior is born. Come, let us adore him.

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. Christ the Savior is born. Come, let us adore him.

HYMN

What Child Is This

> What child is this, who, laid to rest,
> on Mary's lap is sleeping?
> Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,
> while shepherds watch are keeping?

PSALMODY

Psalm 10 *Trust in the Lord*

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

In the Lord I have trusted; how do you say to my soul: "Flee to the mountain like a sparrow!"

For behold, sinners have bent their bow; they have prepared their arrows in the quiver, to shoot in the dark the upright of heart.

For they have destroyed the things that you have accomplished; but what has the just man done?

The Lord is in his holy temple; the Lord's throne is in heaven.

His eyes look upon the poor; his eyelids examine the sons of men.

The Lord examines the just and the impious; but he who loves iniquity hates his own soul.

He will rain down snares upon sinners; fire and brimstone and the spirit of tempests will be the portion of their cup.

For the Lord is just and has loved justices; his face has seen uprightness.

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 11 *Prayer Against the Faithless*

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

Save me, O Lord, for the holy man has failed, for truths have decreased from among the sons of men.

They have spoken vain things, each one to his neighbor; deceitful lips are in their heart, and in their heart they have spoken evils.

May the Lord destroy all deceitful lips and the tongue that speaks proud things.

Those who say: "We will magnify our tongue; our lips are our own; who is our Lord?"

"Because of the misery of the needy and the groaning of the poor, I will now arise," says the Lord.

"I will place him in salvation; I will deal confidently with him."

The words of the Lord are pure words: silver tried by fire, purged from the earth, refined sevenfold.

You, O Lord, will keep us and preserve us from this generation forever.

The impious walk around; according to your greatness you have multiplied the sons 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.

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

Psalm 12 *Trusting in God's Salvation*

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

How long, O Lord, will you forget me to the end? How long do you turn your face away from me?

How long will I take counsel in my soul, sorrow in my heart through the day?

How long will my enemy be exalted over me?

Look upon me and hear me, O Lord my God.

Enlighten my eyes, lest I ever sleep in death, lest at any time my enemy say: "I have prevailed against him."

Those who trouble me will rejoice when I am moved; but I have trusted in your mercy.

My heart will rejoice in your salvation; I will sing to the Lord, who gives good things to me, and I will sing to the name of the Lord Most High.

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.*

FIRST READING: SCRIPTURE

MICAH 5:4-5

And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; and he shall be the one of

peace.

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.

SECOND READING: PATRISTIC OR HAGIOGRAPHIC

Saint Leo the Great

Sermon 6 on the Nativity

Share in the Divine Nature

> Dearly beloved, today our Savior is born. Let us rejoice. Sadness should have no place on the birthday of life. The fear of death has been swallowed up; life brings us joy with the promise of eternity. No one is shut out from this joy; all share the same reason for rejoicing. Our Lord, victor over sin and death, finding no man free from sin, came to free us all. Let the saint rejoice as he sees the palm of victory at hand. Let the sinner be glad as he receives the offer of forgiveness. Let the gentile take courage as he is summoned to life. For the Son of God in the fullness of time has united himself to a human nature in order to reconcile it to its maker. You then, dearly beloved, should recognize your dignity. Since you have been made partakers of the divine nature, do not return by evil deeds to the former base condition. Bear in mind of what head and of what body you are a member. Never forget that you have been rescued from the power of darkness and brought into the light of the kingdom of God.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

Father, the saints and fathers of the church proclaimed the mystery of the incarnation with joy. May their words renew our joy in the Word made flesh; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

DISMISSAL

Let us praise the Lord.
And give him thanks.