Office of Readings

Thursday, April 1, 2004

Lent, Week 5 — 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 Christ, who for our sake bore the cross and conquered death.

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 Christ, who for our sake bore the cross and conquered death.

HYMN

Again We Keep This Solemn Fast

> Again we keep this solemn fast,
> a gift of faith from ages past,
> this Lent which binds us lovingly
> to faith and hope and charity.

Psalm 34 *Prayer Against Enemies*

> *Ant. Turn to me, O Lord, and have mercy on me.*

Judge, O Lord, those who harm me; fight against those who fight against me.

Take up a shield and armor, and rise up as my help.

Draw out a sword and close in against those who pursue me; say to my soul: "I am your salvation."

Let those who seek my soul be confounded and ashamed; let those who consider evils for me be turned back and be confounded.

Let them be like dust before the wind, and the Angel of the Lord afflicting them.

Let their way become dark and slippery, and the Angel of the Lord pursuing them.

For without cause they have hidden their snare for me unto destruction; without cause they have reproached my soul.

Let the snare he has not seen come upon him, and let the trap he has hidden catch him; and let him fall into that snare.

But my soul will exult in the Lord and will delight in his salvation.

All my bones will say: "Lord, who is like to you? You rescue the poor man from the hand of those stronger than him, the needy and the poor from those who plunder him."

Unjust witnesses have risen up, asking me things I know nothing about.

They repaid me evil things for good things, to the desolation of my soul.

But when they troubled me, I was clothed with a haircloth, and I humbled my soul with fasting, and my prayer would return to my bosom.

I acted pleasing to my neighbor as to a brother of mine; as one mourning and sorrowing, so was I humbled.

And they rejoiced against me and were gathered together; scourges were gathered together against me, and I did not know it.

They were scattered, yet they were not compunctious; they tempted me, they mocked me with mockery; they gnashed their teeth against me.

O Lord, when will you look upon this? Restore my soul from their malice, my only life from the lions.

I will confess to you in the great church; among a formidable people I will praise you.

Let those who are my adversaries unjustly not rejoice over me; those who hate me without cause and wink their eyes.

For truly they spoke peaceably with me, and speaking with anger, they thought up deceits.

And they opened their mouths wide against me; they said, "Well done, well done! Our eyes have seen it."

You have seen, O Lord; do not be silent; O Lord, do not withdraw from me.

Arise and be attentive to my judgment, to my cause, O my God and my Lord.

Judge me according to your justice, O Lord my God, and let them not rejoice over me.

Let them not say in their hearts: "Well done, well done, to our soul." Neither let them say: "We have swallowed him up."

Let them be ashamed and fear all at once who rejoice at my evils; let them be clothed with shame and shame who speak great things against me.

Let those who approve of my justice exult and rejoice; and let those who desire the peace of his servant always say: "The Lord be magnified."

And my tongue will meditate on your justice, your praise all the day long.

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. Turn to me, O Lord, and have mercy on me.*

Psalm 35 *Psalm 35*

> *Ant. Turn to me, O Lord, and have mercy on me.*

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.

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. Turn to me, O Lord, and have mercy on me.*

Psalm 36 *Trust in Providence*

> *Ant. Turn to me, O Lord, and have mercy on me.*

Do not vie with evildoers, nor envy those who work iniquity.

For they will quickly wither like grass and fade like the green herb.

Hope in the Lord and do good, and dwell in the land, and you will be fed with its riches.

Delight in the Lord and he will give you the requests of your heart.

Reveal your way to the Lord, and hope in him, and he will accomplish it.

And he will bring forth your justice like light and your judgment like midday.

Be subject to the Lord and pray to him; do not vie with the man who prospers in his way, with the man who acts unjustly.

Cease from anger and leave behind fury; do not vie with others so as to do evil.

For those who do evil will be destroyed, but those who endure the Lord, they will inherit the earth.

And yet a little while and the sinner will not be; and you will seek his place and will not find it.

But the meek will inherit the earth and will delight in abundance of peace.

The sinner will watch the just and will gnash his teeth against him.

But the Lord will laugh at him, for he foresaw that his day would come.

The wicked have drawn out the sword; they have bent their bow, to cast down the poor and the needy, to slaughter the upright of heart.

Let their sword enter into their own hearts, and let their bows be broken.

Better is a little to the just than the many riches of the wicked.

For the arms of the wicked will be broken, but the Lord strengthens the just.

The Lord knows the days of the undefiled, and their inheritance will be in eternity.

They will not be confounded in an evil time, and in the days of famine they will be satisfied.

For the wicked will perish; but the enemies of the Lord, immediately after they are honored and exalted, will be consumed and fade away like smoke.

The sinner will borrow and will not repay; but the just one shows mercy and gives.

For those who bless him will inherit the earth; but those who curse him will perish.

The steps of a man will be directed by the Lord, and he will desire his way.

When he falls, he will not be destroyed, for the Lord places his hand below.

I was young and now I am old; yet I have not seen the just one forsaken, nor his seed seeking bread.

He shows mercy all day long and lends, and his seed will be in blessing.

Depart from evil and do good, and dwell forever and ever.

For the Lord loves judgment and will not forsake his saints; they will be preserved forever.

The unjust will be punished, and the seed of the wicked will perish.

But the just will inherit the earth and will dwell upon it forever.

The mouth of the just will meditate wisdom, and his tongue will speak judgment.

The law of his God is in his heart, and his steps will not be supplanted.

The wicked spy on the just and seeks to put him to death.

But the Lord will not leave him in his hands, nor condemn him when he is judged.

Wait for the Lord and keep his way, and he will exalt you to inherit the earth; when the wicked perish, you will see it.

I have seen the wicked highly exalted and lifted up like the cedars of Lebanon.

And I passed by, and behold, he was not; and I sought him and his place was not found.

Keep innocence and behold equity, for the remnants of the peaceful man are peaceable.

But the unjust will be destroyed together; the remnants of the wicked will perish.

But the salvation of the just comes from the Lord, and he is their protector in the time of trouble.

And the Lord will help them and rescue them; and he will rescue them from the wicked and will save them, because they have hoped in 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. Turn to me, O Lord, and have mercy on me.*

FIRST READING: SCRIPTURE

PSALM 34:18

> The Lord is near to the brokenhearted, and saves the crushed in spirit.

RESPONSORY

V. Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love.
R. Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love.
V. According to the multitude of your tender mercies,
R. blot out my transgressions.

SECOND READING: PATRISTIC OR HAGIOGRAPHIC

Saint Leo the Great

Sermon 6 on Lent

The Works of Lent

> The paschal feast is at hand, dearly beloved, calling us to renewed observance. The fasting of Lent prepares us for the holy days of our redemption. There are three things, dearly beloved, which principally belong to religious devotion, namely prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, in the exercise of which while every time is accepted, yet that ought more especially to be kept which we have received as handed down to us by apostolic institution. For we are summoned to more fervent observance of these things by the sacredness of this season. Now we must give more time to prayer, be more ready to fast, more generous in almsgiving. Let not him who has more spare time in prayer fail to intercede for others. Let not him who is well-bodied fail to afflict his body. Let not him who has wealth withhold charity. Let Lent be a time of genuine conversion, not merely a performance of exterior acts but a deep turning of the heart to God.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

Lord, as we read and pray today, soften our hearts. Where we are proud, make us humble; where we are hard, make us tender; where we are cold, set us on fire with your love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

DISMISSAL

Let us praise the Lord.
And give him thanks.