Office of Readings

Tuesday, December 14, 2004

Saint John of the Cross, Priest and Doctor

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 coming to bring salvation to his people.

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 coming to bring salvation to his people.

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.

Psalm 49 *God the Judge*

> *Ant. The Lord is near; do not be anxious about anything.*

The God of gods, the Lord has spoken, and he has called the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting.

From Zion, the perfection of his beauty, God will shine forth.

Our God will come openly; our God will come and not keep silence.

A fire will blaze in his sight, and around him is a great tempest.

He will call upon the heavens above and the earth, to separate his people.

"Gather his holy ones to him, who arrange his covenant over sacrifices."

And the heavens will announce his justice; for God is the judge.

"Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify against you: I am God, your God."

"I will not rebuke you for your sacrifices; and your burnt offerings are before me always."

"I will not receive calves from your house, nor he-goats from your flocks."

"For all the wild animals of the forest are mine: the beasts on the mountains and the oxen."

"I know all the birds of the heavens, and the beauty of the field is with me."

"If I were hungry, I would not tell you; for the world is mine and its fullness."

"Will I eat the flesh of bulls? Or will I drink the blood of goats?"

"Immolate to God the sacrifice of praise, and repay your vows to the Most High."

"And call upon me in the day of tribulation; I will rescue you, and you will honor me."

But to the sinner God has said: "Why do you declare my justices and take up my covenant in your mouth?"

"Yet you have hated discipline, and you have cast my words behind you."

"If you saw a thief, you ran with him, and with adulterers you set your portion."

"Your mouth has abounded with malice, and your tongue has framed deceits."

"Sitting, you spoke against your brother, and you set up a scandal against your mother's son."

"These things you have done, and I was silent. You thought, unjustly, that I would be like you."

"But I will reprove you and set your crimes before your face."

"Understand these things, you who forget God; lest at any time he snatch you away, and there will be no one to rescue you."

"The sacrifice of praise will honor me; and in that way I will show him the salvation of God."

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 Lord is near; do not be anxious about anything.*

Psalm 50 *A Penitential Psalm*

> *Ant. The Lord is near; do not be anxious about anything.*

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. The Lord is near; do not be anxious about anything.*

Psalm 51 *Have Mercy on Me, O God*

> *Ant. The Lord is near; do not be anxious about anything.*

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.

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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.

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> *Ant. The Lord is near; do not be anxious about anything.*

FIRST READING: SCRIPTURE

MICAH 5:2

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.

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

Saint John of Damascus

Orthodox Faith, Book 4

The Two Advents of Christ

> We profess the coming of the Son of God, and we look for his coming again. The first was a coming in weakness and humility and was signified by the prophets in advance; the other will be glorious and manifest. The first was hidden; the second will be seen by all. The first came to save; the second will come to judge. He came to preach the gospel of peace to those who are far off, and peace to those who are near. And this took place through his first coming. Through faith and knowledge he brought us close to God and made us his own people and heirs of his heavenly kingdom. But on his second coming, the one who will judge the whole world in righteousness, he who will render to each according to his works, will himself be our judge. Let us run to meet him with eagerness and love, not with trembling. Let us show him those works which the Spirit enables us to do, so that we may share in his joy and dwell in his light, forever and ever.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

O God, the prophets saw from afar what we now celebrate. Grant us through their words a renewed sense of wonder at your saving plan; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

DISMISSAL

Let us praise the Lord.

And give him thanks.