Office of Readings

Sunday, December 25, 2005

The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)

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 on this great solemnity.

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 on this great solemnity.

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 1 *The Way of the Just*

> *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 man who has not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, and has not stood in the way of sinners, and has not sat in the chair of pestilence.

But his will is in the law of the Lord, and he will meditate on his law day and night.

And he will be like a tree that is planted near the flowing streams of water, which will yield its fruit in its time, and its leaf will not fall away, and all things whatsoever that he does will prosper.

But the ungodly are not so; they are like the dust that the wind blows away from the face of the earth.

Therefore the ungodly will not rise up again in judgment, nor sinners in the council of the just.

For the Lord knows the way of the just, and the way of the ungodly will perish.

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 2 *The Reign of the Lord's Anointed*

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

Why have the Gentiles raged, and why have the peoples been meditating on vain things?

The kings of the earth have stood up, and the leaders have joined together as one, against the Lord and against his Christ.

"Let us break their bonds apart," and let us cast their yoke away from us."

He who dwells in the heavens will mock them, and the Lord will laugh at them.

Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and he will trouble them in his fury.

But I have been appointed king by him over Zion, his holy mountain, proclaiming his precept.

The Lord said to me: "You are my son; this day I have begotten you."

"Ask of me, and I will give you the Gentiles as your inheritance, and the ends of the earth as your possession."

"You will rule them with an iron rod, and you will break them like a potter's vessel."

And now, O kings, understand; accept instruction, you who judge the earth.

Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice in him with trembling.

Accept discipline, lest the Lord become angry and you perish from the just way.

When his anger burns in a short time, blessed are all who trust 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. Today Christ is born for us; glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will.*

Psalm 3 *Morning Prayer for Help*

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

O Lord, why have those who afflict me increased? Many are rising up against me.

Many say to my soul, "There is no salvation for him in his God."

But you, O Lord, are my defender; you are my glory and the one who lifts up my head.

I have cried out to the Lord with my voice, and he has heard me from his holy mountain.

I have slept and been at rest, and I have risen up, because the Lord has taken me up.

I will not fear the thousands of people surrounding me; arise, O Lord; save me, my God.

For you have struck all who are hostile to me without cause; you have shattered the teeth of sinners.

Salvation is of the Lord, and your blessing is upon your people.

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

1 JOHN 4:14

And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world.

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

Origen of Alexandria

Homily on Luke 13

The Gift of the Magi

> The Magi came from the east and brought gifts to the Lord. Gold was given to him as to a king; frankincense as to God; myrrh as to one who would die. Now we too can offer gifts to the Lord. If you have gold, that is the wealth of good deeds, offer it to him. If you have frankincense, that is the prayer that rises like incense to God from a pure conscience, offer it to him. If you have myrrh, and myrrh here signifies the mortification of the flesh, offer it to him. The Lord has no lack of earthly gold, but he desires the gold of your virtue. He is not without incense from Arabia, but he seeks the prayer of your heart. And myrrh — what does he need with the myrrh of Sheba? — he looks for your willingness to take up the cross and follow him. Therefore let us come to the manger where the Christ-child lies and offer him what we have: our hearts, our prayers, and our lives dedicated to his service.

TE DEUM

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CONCLUDING PRAYER

Lord God, in reading and prayer today may we come to know your Son more deeply, love him more truly, and follow him more closely; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

DISMISSAL

Let us praise the Lord.

And give him thanks.