Office of Readings

Friday, December 14, 2001

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 37 *Prayer of a Repentant Sinner*

> *Ant. Come, Lord Jesus, for whom we long; fill your people with your blessing.*

O Lord, do not rebuke me in your wrath, nor chastise me in your fury.

For your arrows have been fixed in me, and you have confirmed your hand upon me.

There is no health in my flesh before the face of your wrath; there is no peace for my bones before the face of my sins.

For my iniquities have gone over my head, and like a heavy burden they have been made heavy upon me.

My sores have putrefied and been corrupted before the face of my foolishness.

I have become miserable and I have been bowed down to the end; I have gone about in sorrow all day long.

For my loins have been filled with illusions, and there is no health in my flesh.

I have been afflicted and humbled greatly; I have cried out with the groaning of my heart.

O Lord, all my desire is before you, and my groaning has not been hidden from you.

My heart has been troubled, my strength has forsaken me, and even the light of my eyes itself has departed from me.

My friends and my neighbors have drawn near and have stood against me.

And those who were close to me have stood far off; and those who sought my soul used violence.

And those who sought evils for me spoke vanities and they meditated upon deceits all day long.

But I, like one who is deaf, did not hear, and like one who is dumb, not opening his mouth.

And I became like a man who does not hear and who has no reproofs in his mouth.

For in you, O Lord, I have hoped; you will hear me, O Lord my God.

For I said: "Lest at any time my enemies rejoice over me," and while my feet were moved, they spoke greatly against me.

For I am ready for scourges, and my sorrow is continually before me.

For I will declare my iniquity, and I will think about my sin.

But my enemies live and are stronger than me, and those who hate me unjustly have been multiplied.

Those who repay evil for good spoke detractingly, because I followed goodness.

Do not forsake me, O Lord my God; do not depart from me.

Attend to my help, O Lord, the God of my salvation.

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, Lord Jesus, for whom we long; fill your people with your blessing.*

Psalm 38 *The Transience of Life*

> *Ant. Come, Lord Jesus, for whom we long; fill your people with your blessing.*

I said: "I will keep my ways, so that I may not sin with my tongue."

I placed a guard on my mouth, when the sinner stood before me.

I was muted and humbled, and kept silence from good things, and my sorrow was renewed.

My heart became hot within me, and in my meditation fire will blaze up.

I spoke with my tongue: "O Lord, make my end known to me, and what is the number of my days, so that I may know what remains for me."

Behold, you have made my days measurable, and my substance is as nothing before you.

Truly, all vanity: every man living.

Truly, man passes by like an image; and he is in turmoil without purpose.

He stores up and does not know for whom he will gather it.

And now, what is my expectation? Is it not the Lord? And my substance is with you.

Rescue me from all my iniquities; you have made me a reproach for the fool.

I was made dumb and did not open my mouth, because you have acted.

Remove your scourges from me.

For I have failed at the strength of your hand; you have corrected man for iniquity.

And you have made his soul waste away like a spider; truly, all vanity: every man.

Hear my prayer, O Lord, and my supplication; give ear to my tears.

Do not be silent, because I am a newcomer before you and a pilgrim, as all my fathers were.

Forgive me, so that I may be refreshed before I depart and exist no more.

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, Lord Jesus, for whom we long; fill your people with your blessing.*

Psalm 39 *Patient Waiting on God*

> *Ant. Come, Lord Jesus, for whom we long; fill your people with your blessing.*

I waited patiently for the Lord, and he was attentive to me.

And he heard my prayers and he drew me out of the pit of misery and from the muddy mire.

And he set my feet upon a rock and directed my steps.

And he put a new canticle into my mouth, a song to our God.

Many will see and will fear, and they will hope in the Lord.

Blessed is the man whose hope is the name of the Lord, and who has not looked upon vanities and lying follies.

You have done great things, O Lord my God; your wondrous works, and your thoughts: there is no one like you.

I declared and I spoke; they were multiplied beyond number.

Sacrifice and oblation you did not desire; but you have perfected ears for me.

Burnt offering and sin offering you did not require; then I said, "Behold, I come."

In the heading of the book it is written of me that I should do your will; O my God, I have desired it, and your law in the midst of my heart.

I have declared your justice in the great church; behold, I will not restrain my lips: O Lord, you know it.

I have not hidden your justice within my heart; I have declared your truth and your salvation.

I have not hidden your mercy and your truth from the great council.

But you, O Lord, do not remove your compassion from me; your mercy and your truth have always upheld me.

For evils without number have surrounded me; my iniquities have overtaken me, and I was not able to see.

They have been multiplied above the hairs of my head, and my heart has forsaken me.

Be pleased, O Lord, to rescue me; look down, O Lord, to help me.

Let them be ashamed and fear all at once who seek my soul to take it away.

Let them be turned backward and be ashamed who desire evils for me.

Let them bear their shame all at once who say to me: "Well done, well done."

Let all who seek you exult and rejoice in you; and let those who love your salvation say always: "The Lord be magnified."

But I am needy and poor; the Lord is concerned for me.

You are my helper and my deliverer; O my God, do not delay.

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, Lord Jesus, for whom we long; fill your people with your blessing.*

FIRST READING: SCRIPTURE

ZECHARIAH 9:9

Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

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 Leo the Great

Sermon 1 on the Nativity

The Purpose of the Incarnation

> Our Savior, dearly beloved, was born today. Let us rejoice. For there is no proper place for sadness when we keep the birthday of the Life which drives away the fear of death and brings to us the joy of promised eternity. No one is kept from sharing in this happiness. There is for all one common measure of joy, because as our Lord the destroyer of sin and death finds no one free from charge, so he came to free us all. Let the saint exult in that he approaches victory. Let the sinner be glad in that he is invited to pardon. Let the gentile take courage in that he is called to life. For the Son of God in the fullness of time which the inscrutable depth of the divine counsel has determined, took on him the nature of man, thereby to reconcile it to its Author; in order that the inventor of death, the devil, might be conquered through that very nature which he had conquered. In this conflict undertaken for us, the fight was fought on great and wonderful principles of fairness; for the Almighty Lord enters the lists with his fierce foe not in his own majesty but in our humility.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

God of all hope, grant that these readings may nourish in us the hope that does not disappoint; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

DISMISSAL

Let us praise the Lord.

And give him thanks.