Office of Readings

Monday, March 18, 2002

Saint Cyril of Jerusalem, Bishop 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 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.

PSALMODY

Psalm 4 *Evening Prayer of Trust*

> *Ant. Have mercy on me, O God, in your great kindness.*

When I called upon him, the God of my justice heard me; in tribulation you have enlarged me. Have mercy on me, and hear my prayer.

O sons of men, how long will you be dull of heart? Why do you love vanity and seek out falsehood?

Know that the Lord has made his holy one wonderful; the Lord will hear me when I cry out to him.

Be angry, but do not sin; what you say in your hearts, regret it upon your beds.

Offer up a sacrifice of justice and trust in the Lord. Many say, "Who shows us good things?"

The light of your face, O Lord, has been impressed upon us; you have given joy to my heart.

By the fruit of their grain, their wine and oil, they are multiplied.

In peace, together in the selfsame, I will sleep and I will rest.

For you, O Lord, have singularly settled me in hope.

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. Have mercy on me, O God, in your great kindness.*

Psalm 5 *A Morning Plea*

> *Ant. Have mercy on me, O God, in your great kindness.*

Give ear to my words, O Lord; understand my cry.

Attend to the voice of my prayer, O my King and my God.

For to you I will pray; O Lord, in the morning you will hear my voice.

In the morning I will stand before you, and I will see; because you are not a God who wills iniquity.

Neither will the malicious dwell near you, nor will the unjust persist before your eyes.

You hate all those who work iniquity; you will destroy all who speak falsehood.

The bloodthirsty and deceitful man the Lord will abominate.

But I, in the multitude of your mercy, will enter your house; I will worship toward your holy temple in your fear.

Lead me, O Lord, in your justice; because of my enemies, direct my way in your sight.

For there is no truth in their mouth; their heart is vain.

Their throat is an open sepulchre; they acted deceitfully with their tongues; judge them, O God.

Let them fall from their devices; according to the multitude of their wickednesses, cast them out, for they have provoked you, O Lord.

But let all who hope in you rejoice; they will exult forever, and you will dwell in them.

And all who love your name will glory in you, for you will bless the just.

O Lord, as with a shield of your good will, you have crowned us.

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. Have mercy on me, O God, in your great kindness.*

Psalm 6 *Prayer in Distress*

> *Ant. Have mercy on me, O God, in your great kindness.*

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

Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am weak; heal me, O Lord, for my bones are troubled.

And my soul is greatly troubled; but, O Lord, how long?

Return, O Lord, and rescue my soul; save me for the sake of your mercy.

For there is no one in death who is mindful of you, and who will confess you in the underworld?

I have labored in my groaning; every night I will wash my bed; I will water my couch with my tears.

My eye is troubled by rage; I have grown old among all my enemies.

Depart from me, all you workers of iniquity, for the Lord has heard the voice of my weeping.

The Lord has heard my supplication; the Lord has received my prayer.

All my enemies will be put to shame and greatly troubled; they will be turned back and put to shame very suddenly.

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. Have mercy on me, O God, in your great kindness.*

FIRST READING: SCRIPTURE

JOEL 2:12-13

> Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.

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 John Chrysostom

On Fasting, Sermon 1

The Purpose of Fasting

> Do you want to honor the fast? Then do not merely abstain from food, but purify your soul from sin. Leave off doing evil; cease from anger; put away wrath; tear up false accusations; do not deliver yourself to envy. Do not eat flesh only, but eat not the flesh of your brother by means of calumny; do not drink wine, but drink not the blood of your neighbor by means of outrage and unjust judgment. Do these things and you will have truly fasted with a fast acceptable to God. Fasting is for this reason: to humiliate the body, to bridle lust, to tame passion, to set the mind free for prayer. For nothing sharpens the mind for the understanding of spiritual things as much as fasting. Fasting is a physician; it heals diseases of the soul; it puts to flight the spirit of pride; it purges us of the dross of earthly affections. With fasting, prayer reaches heaven more readily; fasting and prayer together are as two wings that lift up the soul.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

Lord, in this holy season grant us the grace to hear your word with penitent hearts and to be transformed by what we hear; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

DISMISSAL

Let us praise the Lord.
And give him thanks.