Office of Readings

Tuesday, December 31, 2002

Saint Sylvester I, Pope

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. Christ the Savior is born. Come, let us adore him.

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. Christ the Savior is born. Come, let us adore him.

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 7 *Plea for Divine Justice*

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

O Lord my God, in you I have hoped; save me from all who pursue me, and deliver me.

Lest at any time he seize my soul like a lion, while there is no one to redeem me or to save me.

O Lord my God, if I have done this thing, if there is iniquity in my hands,

if I have repaid with evils those who repaid me good, let me deservedly fall empty before my enemies.

Let the enemy pursue my soul and seize it, and trample my life into the earth, and bring down my glory into the dust.

Rise up, O Lord, in your wrath, and be exalted at the borders of my enemies.

And arise, O Lord my God, in the precept that you have commanded, and the congregation of people will surround you.

And because of this, return on high; the Lord judges the peoples.

Judge me, O Lord, according to my justice and according to my innocence in me.

The wickedness of sinners will be brought to nothing, and you will direct the just; the searcher of hearts and reins is God.

My help is from God, who saves the upright of heart.

God is a just judge, strong and patient; is he angry every day?

Unless you will have been converted, he will brandish his sword; he has bent his bow and made it ready.

And in it he has prepared the instruments of death; he has made ready his arrows for those who burn.

Behold, he has been in labor with injustice; he has conceived toil and given birth to iniquity.

He has opened a pit and dug it out, and he has fallen into the hole he made.

His toil will be turned back onto his own head, and his iniquity will descend onto his crown.

I will give thanks to the Lord according to his justice, and I will sing to the name of the Lord Most High.

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 8 *The Glory of God and the Dignity of Man*

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

O Lord, our Lord, how admirable is your name in all the earth!

For your magnificence has been elevated above the heavens.

Out of the mouth of infants and of sucklings, you have perfected praise, because of your enemies, so that you may destroy the enemy and the defender.

For I will see your heavens, the works of your fingers: the moon and the stars, which you have founded.

What is man, that you are mindful of him? Or the son of man, that you visit him?

You have made him a little less than the angels; you have crowned him with glory and honor.

And you have set him over the works of your hands.

You have subjected all things under his feet: all sheep and oxen, moreover, even the beasts of the field,

the birds of the air and the fish of the sea, who pass through the paths of the sea.

O Lord, our Lord, how admirable is your name throughout all the earth!

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 9 *Praise for God's Justice*

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

I will confess to you, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will narrate all your wonders.

I will be glad and rejoice in you; I will sing to your name, O Most High.

For my enemy is turned back; they will be weakened and perish from before your face.

For you have maintained my judgment and my cause; you sat on the throne, judging justly.

You have rebuked the Gentiles and the impious has perished; you have blotted out their name for ever and ever.

The swords of the enemy have failed to the end, and you have destroyed their cities; their memory has perished with a resounding noise.

And the Lord remains for eternity; he has prepared his throne for judgment.

And he will judge the world with equity; he will judge the peoples with justice.

And the Lord has become a refuge for the poor: a helper in tribulation.

And let those who know your name hope in you; for you have not forsaken those who seek you, O Lord.

Sing psalms to the Lord who dwells in Zion; declare his pursuits among the Gentiles.

For he remembers them, seeking the blood of the poor; he has not forgotten the cry of the poor.

Have mercy on me, O Lord; see my humiliation from my enemies.

You who exalt me from the gates of death, so that I may declare all your praises at the gates of the daughter of Zion.

I will rejoice in your salvation; the Gentiles have been stuck in the destruction they have made.

Their foot has been snared in the very trap they have hidden.

The Lord will be known by executing judgments; the sinner has been caught in the works of his own hands.

The wicked will be turned toward hell, and all the nations that have forgotten God.

For the poor will not be forgotten in the end; the patience of the poor will not perish forever.

Rise up, O Lord; do not let man be strengthened; let the Gentiles be judged in your sight.

Appoint a lawgiver over them, O Lord, that the Gentiles may know themselves to be only human.

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

ISAIAH 9:6-7

For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

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

Saint Gregory of Nazianzus

Oration 38, On the Theophany

Christ Is Born

> Christ is born, glorify him. Christ comes from heaven, go and meet him. Christ descends to earth, let us be raised. Let all the world sing to the Lord; let the heavens rejoice and let the earth be glad for his sake who was first in heaven and is now on earth. Christ is here in the flesh, let us exult with trembling and with joy: with trembling because of our sins, with joy because of our hope. Once again the darkness is dispersed; once again light is created. Let the people who sat in the darkness of ignorance now see the great light of full knowledge. The old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. The letter gives way, the spirit gains the ascendancy. The shadows flee away, the truth comes in upon them. Christs is born of a virgin. O great wonder! The creator of time enters into time. He, who is without beginning, begins. He becomes what he was not, while remaining still what he was. This is the mystery of the Nativity.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, the good news of your birth was first proclaimed by angels. May the words of the church's prayer proclaim that same good news to our hearts; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

DISMISSAL

Let us praise the Lord.

And give him thanks.