Office of Readings

Thursday, March 20, 2003

Lent, Week 2 — Thursday

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 55 *In God I Trust*

> *Ant. Turn to me, O Lord, and have mercy on me.*

Have mercy on me, O God, for man has trampled on me; all day long he has afflicted me, fighting against me.

My enemies have trampled on me all day long; for many who fight against me are from on high.

In the day when I am afraid, I will hope in you.

In God I will praise my words; in God I have hoped, I will not fear what flesh can do to me.

All day long they have detested my words; all their thoughts are against me for evil.

They will dwell and hide themselves; they will watch my heel, just as they waited for my soul.

For nothing, you will save them; in your anger you will break the peoples, O God.

I have announced my life to you; you have set my tears in your sight, as also in your promise.

Then my enemies will be turned back, on whatever day I will call upon you.

Behold, I know that you are my God.

In God I will praise the word; in the Lord I will praise his speech.

In God I have hoped; I will not fear what man can do to me.

In me, O God, are the vows you will receive; I will render praises to you.

For you have rescued my soul from death, and my feet from falling, so that I may be pleasing before God in the light of the living.

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. Turn to me, O Lord, and have mercy on me.*

Psalm 56 *Steadfast Trust in God*

> *Ant. Turn to me, O Lord, and have mercy on me.*

Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me; for my soul trusts in you.

And in the shadow of your wings I will hope, until iniquity passes by.

I will cry out to the most high God, the God who has benefited me.

He has sent from heaven and rescued me; he gave over to reproach those who trampled on me.

God has sent his mercy and his truth, and he has rescued my soul from the midst of the lion cubs.

I have slept troubled; the sons of men, their teeth are weapons and arrows, and their tongue is a sharp sword.

Be exalted, O God, above the heavens, and your glory above all the earth.

They have prepared a snare for my feet, and they have bowed down my soul.

They have dug a pit before my face, and they fell into it.

My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready; I will sing and compose a psalm.

Arise, my glory; arise, psaltery and harp; I will arise in the early morning.

I will confess to you among the peoples, O Lord, and I will compose a psalm to you among the nations.

For your mercy has been magnified, even to the heavens, and your truth even to the clouds.

Be exalted, O God, above the heavens, and your glory above 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. Turn to me, O Lord, and have mercy on me.*

Psalm 57 *Rescue from the Wicked*

> *Ant. Turn to me, O Lord, and have mercy on me.*

If truly you speak justice, judge what is right, O sons of men.

For in your heart you work iniquity on the earth; your hands weave injustices.

The wicked have become estranged from the womb; they have wandered astray from the womb; they have spoken false things.

Their fury is like that of a serpent; like that of a deaf asp, stopping up its ears.

Which will not hear the voice of the enchanters, nor of the wizard casting spells wisely.

God will crush their teeth in their mouth; the Lord will break the molars of the lions.

They will come to nothing, like water flowing away; he has bent his bow until they are weakened.

Like wax that is melted, they will be taken away; fire has fallen upon them, and they will not see the sun.

Before your thorns could perceive the bramble, he swallows them up as if alive, as if in wrath.

The just will rejoice when he has seen the retribution, he will wash his hands in the blood of the sinner.

And a man will say: "Truly there is a fruit to the just one; truly there is a God judging them on 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. Turn to me, O Lord, and have mercy on me.*

FIRST READING: SCRIPTURE

PSALM 34:18

The Lord is near to the brokenhearted, and saves the crushed in spirit.

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 Leo the Great

Sermon 6 on Lent

The Works of Lent

> The paschal feast is at hand, dearly beloved, calling us to renewed observance. The fasting of Lent prepares us for the holy days of our redemption. There are three things, dearly beloved, which principally belong to religious devotion, namely prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, in the exercise of which while every time is accepted, yet that ought more especially to be kept which we have received as handed down to us by apostolic institution. For we are summoned to more fervent observance of these things by the sacredness of this season. Now we must give more time to prayer, be more ready to fast, more generous in almsgiving. Let not him who has more spare time in prayer fail to intercede for others. Let not him who is well-bodied fail to afflict his body. Let not him who has wealth withhold charity. Let Lent be a time of genuine conversion, not merely a performance of exterior acts but a deep turning of the heart to God.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

Lord, as we read and pray today, soften our hearts. Where we are proud, make us humble; where we are hard, make us tender; where we are cold, set us on fire with your love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

DISMISSAL

Let us praise the Lord.
And give him thanks.