Office of Readings

Sunday, February 29, 2004

1st Sunday of Lent

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 the Lord, who for our sake endured temptation and suffering.

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 the Lord, who for our sake endured temptation and suffering.

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 1 *The Way of the Just*

> *Ant. In you, O Lord, have I trusted; let me never be confounded.*

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. In you, O Lord, have I trusted; let me never be confounded.*

Psalm 2 *The Reign of the Lord's Anointed*

> *Ant. In you, O Lord, have I trusted; let me never be confounded.*

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. In you, O Lord, have I trusted; let me never be confounded.*

Psalm 3 *Morning Prayer for Help*

> *Ant. In you, O Lord, have I trusted; let me never be confounded.*

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. In you, O Lord, have I trusted; let me never be confounded.*

FIRST READING: SCRIPTURE

LAMENTATIONS 3:40-41

Let us test and examine our ways, and return to the Lord. Let us lift up our hearts as well as our hands to God in heaven.

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 Gregory of Nyssa

Life of Moses, Book 2

The Continual Ascent to God

> This is true perfection: not to avoid a wicked life because we fear punishment, like slaves; not to do good because we hope for rewards, as if cashing in on the virtuous life by some business-like and contractual arrangement. On the contrary, disregarding all those things for which we hope and which have been reserved by promise, we regard falling from God's friendship as the only thing dreadful and we consider becoming God's friend the only thing worthy of honor and desire. This is the perfection of life for which the soul strives — never to cease from ascending and never to discover any limit to the perfection of the journey. The ascent to God is always open before us. And so that man of God who turned his whole life into a road on which he traveled toward God, never thought that what he had achieved was perfection. He always stretched toward the things before him, always moving higher, always pressing on, never resting. His perfection consisted precisely in his never resting, always grasping what is ahead.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

Father, as we draw near to Holy Week, grant that our reading and prayer may prepare our minds and hearts to celebrate the mystery of our redemption; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

DISMISSAL

Let us praise the Lord.

And give him thanks.