Office of Readings

Sunday, March 21, 2004

4th 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 64 *God's Care for the Earth*

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

A hymn befits you, O God, in Zion; and a vow will be repaid to you in Jerusalem.

Hear my prayer; all flesh will come to you.

Words of the wicked have prevailed over us; but you will be merciful toward our impieties.

Blessed is he whom you have chosen and received; he will dwell in your courts.

We will be filled with the good things of your house; holy is your temple,

wonderful in justice. Hear us, O God our Savior, the hope of all the ends of the earth, and of those far out at sea.

You who prepare the mountains by your strength, being girded with power;

who troubles the depth of the sea, the noise of its waves.

The Gentiles will be troubled, and those who inhabit the ends of the earth will be afraid at your signs.

You will make joyful the outgoings of the morning and evening.

You have visited the earth and saturated it; you have enriched it greatly.

The river of God has been replenished with water; you have prepared their food, for this is its preparation.

Saturate its furrows; multiply its fruits; the earth is glad as it springs up and is watered.

You will bless the crown of the year of your goodness, and your fields will be filled with plenty.

The beautiful places of the wilderness will grow fat, and the hills will be girded with exultation.

The rams of the flock are clothed, and the valleys will abound with grain; they will cry out, yes, they will even sing a hymn.

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 65 *Come and See What God Has Done*

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

Shout with joy to God, all the earth; sing a psalm to his name; give glory to his praise.

Say to God: "How awesome are your works, O Lord! In the multitude of your power your enemies will lie to you."

Let all the earth adore you and sing a psalm to you; let it sing a psalm to your name.

Come and see the works of God; he is formidable in his designs on the sons of men.

He turns the sea into dry land; in the river they will cross on foot; there we will rejoice in him.

He rules in his power forever; his eyes watch over the nations.

Let the rebellious not be exalted in themselves.

Bless our God, you Gentiles, and make the voice of his praise be heard;

who has set my soul in life, and has not given my feet into stirring.

For you have proved us, O God; you have tried us by fire, just as silver is tested.

You led us into a snare; you placed afflictions on our back.

You set men over our heads; we passed through fire and water; and you brought us out into refreshment.

I will enter into your house with burnt offerings; I will repay you my vows

which my lips distinguished and my mouth spoke in my tribulation.

I will offer to you burnt offerings full of marrow, with the burning of rams.

I will offer to you bulls and he-goats.

Come, hear, and I will tell you, all who fear God, what great things he has done for my soul.

I cried out to him with my mouth, and I extolled him with my tongue.

If I have looked upon iniquity in my heart, let the Lord not hear me.

Therefore, God has heard me and has attended to the voice of my supplication.

Blessed is God, who has not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from 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.

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

Psalm 66 *May the Nations Praise God*

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

May God have mercy on us and bless us; may he cause the light of his face to shine upon us, and may he have mercy on us.

So that we may know your way on earth, your salvation in all nations.

Let the peoples confess to you, O God; let all peoples give praise to you.

Let the nations rejoice and exult, for you judge the peoples with equity and direct the nations on the earth.

Let the peoples confess to you, O God; let all peoples give praise to you.

The earth has yielded its fruit.

May God, our God, bless us; may God bless us, and all the ends of the earth fear 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.*

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.