Office of Readings

Friday, April 2, 2004

Saint Francis of Paola, Hermit

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.

Psalm 37 *Prayer of a Repentant Sinner*

> *Ant. My sacrifice is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you will not despise.*

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

For your arrows have been fixed in me, and you have confirmed your hand upon me.

There is no health in my flesh before the face of your wrath; there is no peace for my bones before the face of my sins.

For my iniquities have gone over my head, and like a heavy burden they have been made heavy upon me.

My sores have putrefied and been corrupted before the face of my foolishness.

I have become miserable and I have been bowed down to the end; I have gone about in sorrow all day long.

For my loins have been filled with illusions, and there is no health in my flesh.

I have been afflicted and humbled greatly; I have cried out with the groaning of my heart.

O Lord, all my desire is before you, and my groaning has not been hidden from you.

My heart has been troubled, my strength has forsaken me, and even the light of my eyes itself has departed from me.

My friends and my neighbors have drawn near and have stood against me.

And those who were close to me have stood far off; and those who sought my soul used violence.

And those who sought evils for me spoke vanities and they meditated upon deceits all day long.

But I, like one who is deaf, did not hear, and like one who is dumb, not opening his mouth.

And I became like a man who does not hear and who has no reproofs in his mouth.

For in you, O Lord, I have hoped; you will hear me, O Lord my God.

For I said: "Lest at any time my enemies rejoice over me," and while my feet were moved, they spoke greatly against me.

For I am ready for scourges, and my sorrow is continually before me.

For I will declare my iniquity, and I will think about my sin.

But my enemies live and are stronger than me, and those who hate me unjustly have been multiplied.

Those who repay evil for good spoke detractingly, because I followed goodness.

Do not forsake me, O Lord my God; do not depart from me.

Attend to my help, O Lord, the God of my salvation.

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. My sacrifice is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you will not despise.*

Psalm 38 *The Transience of Life*

> *Ant. My sacrifice is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you will not despise.*

I said: "I will keep my ways, so that I may not sin with my tongue."

I placed a guard on my mouth, when the sinner stood before me.

I was muted and humbled, and kept silence from good things, and my sorrow was renewed.

My heart became hot within me, and in my meditation fire will blaze up.

I spoke with my tongue: "O Lord, make my end known to me, and what is the number of my days, so that I may know what remains for me."

Behold, you have made my days measurable, and my substance is as nothing before you.

Truly, all vanity: every man living.

Truly, man passes by like an image; and he is in turmoil without purpose.

He stores up and does not know for whom he will gather it.

And now, what is my expectation? Is it not the Lord? And my substance is with you.

Rescue me from all my iniquities; you have made me a reproach for the fool.

I was made dumb and did not open my mouth, because you have acted.

Remove your scourges from me.

For I have failed at the strength of your hand; you have corrected man for iniquity.

And you have made his soul waste away like a spider; truly, all vanity: every man.

Hear my prayer, O Lord, and my supplication; give ear to my tears.

Do not be silent, because I am a newcomer before you and a pilgrim, as all my fathers were.

Forgive me, so that I may be refreshed before I depart and exist no more.

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. My sacrifice is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you will not despise.*

Psalm 39 *Patient Waiting on God*

> *Ant. My sacrifice is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you will not despise.*

I waited patiently for the Lord, and he was attentive to me.

And he heard my prayers and he drew me out of the pit of misery and from the muddy mire.

And he set my feet upon a rock and directed my steps.

And he put a new canticle into my mouth, a song to our God.

Many will see and will fear, and they will hope in the Lord.

Blessed is the man whose hope is the name of the Lord, and who has not looked upon vanities and lying follies.

You have done great things, O Lord my God; your wondrous works, and your thoughts: there is no one like you.

I declared and I spoke; they were multiplied beyond number.

Sacrifice and oblation you did not desire; but you have perfected ears for me.

Burnt offering and sin offering you did not require; then I said, "Behold, I come."

In the heading of the book it is written of me that I should do your will; O my God, I have desired it, and your law in the midst of my heart.

I have declared your justice in the great church; behold, I will not restrain my lips: O Lord, you know it.

I have not hidden your justice within my heart; I have declared your truth and your salvation.

I have not hidden your mercy and your truth from the great council.

But you, O Lord, do not remove your compassion from me; your mercy and your truth have always upheld me.

For evils without number have surrounded me; my iniquities have overtaken me, and I was not able to see.

They have been multiplied above the hairs of my head, and my heart has forsaken me.

Be pleased, O Lord, to rescue me; look down, O Lord, to help me.

Let them be ashamed and fear all at once who seek my soul to take it away.

Let them be turned backward and be ashamed who desire evils for me.

Let them bear their shame all at once who say to me: "Well done, well done."

Let all who seek you exult and rejoice in you; and let those who love your salvation say always: "The Lord be magnified."

But I am needy and poor; the Lord is concerned for me.

You are my helper and my deliverer; O my God, do not delay.

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. My sacrifice is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you will not despise.*

FIRST READING: SCRIPTURE

ISAIAH 44:22

I have swept away your transgressions like a cloud, and your sins like mist; return to me, for I have redeemed you.

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

Tertullian

On Prayer, Chapter 28

Prayer Joined with Fasting

> With prayer, fasting is joined. Fasting is the soul of prayer; mercy is the life of fasting. So if you pray, fast; if you fast, show mercy; if you want your petition to be heard, hear the petition of others. If you do not close your ear to others, God will not close his ear to you. Thus the holy writings teach us: fasting has value when joined to prayer; prayer has power when it rises from a fasting and merciful heart. This is the fast that God chooses, says Isaiah: loose the bonds of wickedness, undo the heavy burdens, let the oppressed go free, break every yoke, share your bread with the hungry, bring the poor who are cast out to your house, cover the naked. This fast is not merely going without food; it is a turning of the whole life toward God and toward the neighbor. The exterior act of fasting is only the outward sign of an interior conversion of heart.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

God of mercy, may the words of scripture and the wisdom of the fathers strengthen our Lenten journey and lead us toward a holy Easter; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

DISMISSAL

Let us praise the Lord.
And give him thanks.