Office of Readings

Saturday, December 11, 2004

Saint Damasus 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. Come, let us adore the Lord who is coming to bring salvation to his people.

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 the Lord who is coming to bring salvation to his people.

HYMN

> **The King Shall Come**

> The King shall come when morning dawns
> and light triumphant breaks,
> when beauty gilds the eastern hills
> and life to joy awakes.

PSALMODY

Psalm 40 *Prayer in Sickness*

> *Ant. Your light will dawn, O Lord, and your glory will be seen upon us.*

Blessed is he who considers the poor and the needy; the Lord will rescue him in an evil day.

May the Lord preserve him and give him life, and make him blessed upon the earth, and may he not deliver him to the will of his enemies.

May the Lord bring him help on the bed of his sorrow; you have turned all his couch in his infirmity.

I said: "O Lord, have mercy on me; heal my soul, for I have sinned against you."

My enemies have spoken evil against me: "When will he die and his name perish?"

And if he entered to see me, he spoke with vanity; his heart gathered together iniquity to itself.

He went out and spoke in the same way.

All my enemies whispered against me; they devised evils for me.

They have imposed on me a wicked word: "When he sleeps, will he rise no more?"

For even the man of my peace, in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has greatly supplanted me.

But you, O Lord, have mercy on me and raise me up, and I will repay them.

By this I know that you have willed me: because my enemy will not rejoice over me.

But as for me, you have upheld me through my innocence, and you have confirmed me in your sight forever.

Blessed is the Lord, the God of Israel, from eternity to eternity. So be it. So be it.

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. Your light will dawn, O Lord, and your glory will be seen upon us.*

Psalm 41 *Longing for God's House*

> *Ant. Your light will dawn, O Lord, and your glory will be seen upon us.*

As the deer longs for fountains of water, so my soul longs for you, O God.

My soul has thirsted for God, the living fountain; when will I come and appear before the face of God?

My tears have been my bread day and night, while they say to me daily, "Where is your God?"

These things I remembered, and I poured out my soul in me; for I will pass into the place of the wonderful tabernacle, even to the house of God,

amid the voice of joy and praise, the sound of one feasting.

Why are you sad, O my soul? And why do you trouble me?

Hope in God, for I will still confess to him: the salvation of my countenance and my God.

My soul has been troubled within myself; therefore I will remember you from the land of Jordan and Hermon, from the little hill.

Deep calls to deep at the sound of your floodgates.

All your heights and your waves have passed over me.

In the daytime the Lord has commanded his mercy, and in the night his canticle.

With me is a prayer to the God of my life.

I will say to God: "You are my supporter. Why have you forgotten me? And why do I go about in sadness, while the enemy afflicts me?"

While my bones are being broken, my enemies who trouble me have reproached me.

While they say to me daily: "Where is your God?"

Why are you sad, O my soul? And why do you trouble me?

Hope in God, for I will still give praise to him: the salvation of my countenance and my God.

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. Your light will dawn, O Lord, and your glory will be seen upon us.*

Psalm 42 *Send Forth Your Light*

> *Ant. Your light will dawn, O Lord, and your glory will be seen upon us.*

Judge me, O God, and separate my cause from the nation that is not holy; deliver me from the unjust and deceitful man.

For you are my strength, O God; why have you rejected me? And why do I go about in sadness, while the enemy afflicts me?

Send forth your light and your truth; they have led me and brought me to your holy mountain and into your tabernacles.

And I will go to the altar of God, to God who gladdens my youth.

I will praise you on the harp, O God, my God.

Why are you sad, O my soul? And why do you trouble me?

Hope in God, for I will still give praise to him: the salvation of my countenance and my God.

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. Your light will dawn, O Lord, and your glory will be seen upon us.*

FIRST READING: SCRIPTURE

ISAIAH 35:1-2

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing.

RESPONSORY

V. Come, Lord Jesus, do not delay.
R. Come, Lord Jesus, do not delay.
V. Give new courage to your people,
R. who trust in your word.

SECOND READING: PATRISTIC OR HAGIOGRAPHIC

Saint Andrew of Crete

Sermon on the Nativity

The Mystery Hidden from Ages

> Come then, let us observe the Feast. Truly wondrous is the whole chronicle of the Nativity. For this day the ancient slavery is ended, the devil confounded, the demons take to flight, the power of death is broken,

> paradise is unlocked, the curse is taken away, sin is removed from us, error driven out, truth has been brought back, the speech of kindliness diffused, and spreads on every side, a heavenly way of life has been introduced into the earth, angels communicate with men without fear, and men now hold speech with angels. Why is this? Because God is now on earth, and man in heaven; on every side all things are come together. The mystery that was hidden from ages and from generations, now made manifest to his saints, was revealed to us. The Godhead appeared in the flesh; the mortal has put on immortality; the temporal has put on the eternal. Let then the whole creation shout for joy, for the Savior has been born among us. Honor and glory be to God who is over all, from whom and through whom and in whom are all things, to whom be praise and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

O God, the church prepares for Christmas through prayer and reading of your word. May our prayer today draw us closer to the mystery we are about to celebrate; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

DISMISSAL

Let us praise the Lord.
And give him thanks.