Office of Readings

Saturday, December 25, 2004

The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)

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 on this great solemnity.

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 on this great solemnity.

HYMN

What Child Is This

> What child is this, who, laid to rest,
> on Mary's lap is sleeping?
> Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,
> while shepherds watch are keeping?

PSALMODY

Psalm 80 *Sing to God Our Strength*

> *Ant. Today Christ is born for us; glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will.*

Rejoice to God our helper; shout with jubilation to the God of Jacob.

Take up a psalm and give a drum, a pleasant psaltery with a harp.

Blow the trumpet at the new moon, on the notable day of your solemnity.

For it is a precept in Israel, and a judgment for the God of Jacob.

He established it as a testimony in Joseph, when he went out from the land of Egypt.

He heard a tongue which he did not know; he removed his back from burdens.

His hands were serving in baskets.

You called out in tribulation, and I freed you; I heard you in the hidden place of the storm.

I tested you at the waters of contradiction.

Hear, my people, and I will testify against you; O Israel, if you will hear me,

there will be no new god among you, and you will not adore a foreign god.

For I am the Lord your God, who brought you out from the land of Egypt; open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.

But my people did not hear my voice, and Israel was not obedient to me.

And so I dismissed them according to the desires of their heart; they will walk in their own inventions.

If only my people had heard me; if only Israel had walked in my ways!

I would have humbled their enemies as almost nothing, and upon those who troubled them I would have sent my hand.

The enemies of the Lord have lied to him, and their time will be forever.

And he fed them from the fat of the wheat, and filled them with honey from the rock.

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. Today Christ is born for us; glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will.*

Psalm 81 *The Judge of the Gods*

> *Ant. Today Christ is born for us; glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will.*

God has stood in the assembly of gods, and, being in their midst, he judges gods.

"How long will you judge unjustly and accept the persons of the wicked?"

"Judge for the poor and the orphan; give justice to the humble and the poor."

"Rescue the poor and the needy; free him from the hand of the sinner."

They have not known and have not understood; they walk about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth will be shaken.

I said: "You are gods, and all of you are sons of the Most High."

"But you will die like men, and you will fall like one of the princes."

Rise up, O God, judge the earth; for you will inherit among all the nations.

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. Today Christ is born for us; glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will.*

Psalm 82 *A Prayer Against Enemies*

> *Ant. Today Christ is born for us; glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will.*

O God, who will be like you? Do not be silent, and do not be appeased, O God.

For behold, your enemies have made a noise, and those who hate you have lifted up the head.

They have acted with malice in counsel against your people, and they have deliberated against your holy ones.

They have said: "Come, let us dissipate them from the nations, and let the name of Israel no longer be remembered."

For they have deliberated unanimously; they have made a covenant together against you:

the tabernacles of Edom, and the Ishmaelites; Moab and the Hagarenes,

Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek; the foreigners together with the inhabitants of Tyre.

For Assur also has come with them; they have become a support for the sons of Lot.

Do to them as you have done to Midian and Sisera, as to Jabin at the brook of Kishon.

They perished at En-dor; they became like the dung of the earth.

Place their rulers as Oreb and Zeeb, and Zebah and Zalmunna; all their leaders,

who have said: "Let us gain possession of the sanctuary of God for an inheritance."

My God, make them like a wheel, and like stubble before the wind.

Like a fire that burns a wood, and like a flame burning mountains:

so will you pursue them with your tempest, and disturb them in your wrath.

Fill their faces with shame, and they will seek your name, O Lord.

Let them be ashamed and troubled forever and ever; and let them be confounded and perish.

And let them know that the Lord is your name; you alone are the Most High over 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. Today Christ is born for us; glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will.*

FIRST READING: SCRIPTURE

COLOSSIANS 2:9

> For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have come to fullness in him, who is the head of every ruler and authority.

RESPONSORY

V. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us,

R. and we have seen his glory.

V. Full of grace and truth,

R. we have seen his glory.

SECOND READING: PATRISTIC OR HAGIOGRAPHIC

Saint Irenaeus of Lyons

Against Heresies, Book 3

Recapitulation in Christ

> This is why the Lord came in these last days to redeem us: to take on our condition and be born as a man of a woman. By this means he recapitulated in himself the long history of the human race, obtaining salvation for us in this very condition, so that what we lost in Adam, namely, our being according to God's image and likeness, we might recover in Christ Jesus. For it was not possible for Adam, once conquered and shattered by disobedience, to reform himself and obtain the prize of victory. Likewise, it was not possible for us to obtain salvation except through the victory of Christ. Therefore the Son of God, our Lord and God, being the Word of the Father and the Son of man, having become what we are, has made us what he is himself. He became the Son of Man to the end that man also might become the Son of God. The perfect goodness of God the Father consists in this: that our adoption as his children is real and true, that we who were alienated have truly been brought back.

TE DEUM

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CONCLUDING PRAYER

God of the incarnation, may the words we read and pray today enkindle in us a greater love for the one who was born for our salvation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

DISMISSAL

Let us praise the Lord.

And give him thanks.