Office of Readings

Saturday, December 31, 2005

Saint Sylvester 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. Christ the Savior is born. Come, let us adore him.

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. Christ the Savior is born. Come, let us adore him.

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 19 *Prayer for the King*

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

May the Lord hear you in the day of tribulation; may the name of the God of Jacob protect you.

May he send you help from the sanctuary, and may he defend you from Zion.

May he be mindful of all your sacrifices, and may your burnt offering become fruitful.

May he give to you according to your own heart, and confirm all your counsel.

We will rejoice in your salvation; and we will be magnified in the name of our God.

May the Lord fulfill all your petitions; now I know that the Lord has saved his Christ.

He will hear him from his holy heaven; the salvation of his right hand is in power.

Some approach in chariots and some on horses, but we will call upon the name of the Lord our God.

They have been bound and have fallen; but we have risen and have been set upright.

O Lord, save the king, and hear us in the day that we will call upon you.

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 20 *Thanksgiving for Victory*

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

O Lord, the king will rejoice in your strength, and in your salvation he will exult greatly.

You have given him his heart's desire, and you have not withheld the will of his lips.

For you have anticipated him with sweet blessings; you have placed a crown of precious stones on his head.

He asked life from you, and you gave him a length of days forever and ever.

His glory is great in your salvation; glory and great beauty you will place upon him.

For you will give him to be a blessing forever and ever; you will gladden him in joy with your face.

For the king hopes in the Lord, and through the mercy of the Most High, he will not be moved.

Let your hand be found by all your enemies; let your right hand find all who hate you.

You will make them like a fiery oven in the time of your countenance; the Lord will trouble them in his wrath, and fire will devour them.

You will destroy their fruit from the earth and their seed from among the sons of men.

For they have extended evils against you; they have devised a plan which they were not able to establish.

For you will make them turn their back; among your remnants you will prepare their face.

Be exalted, O Lord, in your strength; we will sing and praise your power.

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 21 *My God, Why Have You Forsaken Me?*

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

O God, my God, look upon me; why have you forsaken me? Far from my salvation are the words of my sins.

O my God, I will cry out by day, and you will not hear; and by night, and it will not be foolishness in me.

But you dwell in the sanctuary, the praise of Israel.

In you our fathers hoped; they hoped and you delivered them.

They cried out to you and were saved; they hoped in you and were not confounded.

But I am a worm and not a man; the reproach of men and the outcast of the people.

All who saw me ridiculed me; they spoke with their lips and wagged their heads.

"He hoped in the Lord; let him rescue him; let him save him, since he wants him."

For you have drawn me out from the womb; you are my hope from the breasts of my mother.

I was cast upon you from the womb; from the womb of my mother, you are my God.

Do not depart from me, for tribulation is near, for there is none to help me.

Many calves have surrounded me; fat bulls have besieged me.

They have opened their mouths against me like a lion seizing prey and roaring.

I have been poured out like water, and all my bones have been scattered.

My heart has become like wax, melting in the midst of my bowels.

My strength has dried up like a clay pot, and my tongue has cleaved to my jaws, and you have led me down into the dust of death.

For many dogs have surrounded me; the assembly of the wicked has besieged me.

They have dug my hands and feet; they have numbered all my bones.

And they themselves have looked upon me and stared at me.

They divided my garments among them, and over my clothing they cast lots.

But you, O Lord, do not take your help far from me; attend to my defense.

O God, rescue my soul from the sword, and my only life from the power of the dog.

Save me from the mouth of the lion, and my humility from the horns of the rhinoceros.

I will declare your name to my brothers; in the midst of the church I will praise you.

You who fear the Lord, praise him; all the seed of Jacob, glorify him.

Let all the seed of Israel fear him, because he has not spurned or scorned the supplication of the poor man.

Neither has he turned away his face from me, and when I cried out to him, he heard me.

My praise is with you in the great church; I will pay my vows in the sight of those who fear him.

The poor will eat and will be satisfied, and those who seek the Lord will praise him; their hearts will live forever and ever.

All the ends of the earth will remember and will return to the Lord.

And all the families of the nations will adore in his sight.

For the kingdom is the Lord's and he will rule the nations.

All the fat ones of the earth have eaten and adored; all who descend into the earth will fall before him.

And my soul will live for him, and my seed will serve him.

The generation to come will be announced to the Lord, and the heavens will proclaim his justice to the people who will be born, whom the Lord has made.

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.

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.