Office of Readings

Tuesday, December 26, 2006

Saint Stephen, the First Martyr

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 69 *A Cry for Help*

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

O God, be attentive to my help; O Lord, make haste to help me.

Let them be confounded and ashamed who seek my soul.

Let them be turned backward and blush with shame who desire evils for me.

Let them be turned back immediately, blushing with shame, 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: "God be magnified."

But I am poor and needy; O God, help me.

You are my helper and my deliverer; O Lord, 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. Today Christ is born for us; glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will.*

Psalm 70 *Prayer in Old Age*

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

In you, O Lord, I have hoped, let me never be confounded.

In your justice rescue me and free me; incline your ear to me and save me.

Be a strong place of refuge for me, so as to make me safe always.

For you are my patience, O Lord; O Lord, you are my hope from my youth.

In you I have been confirmed from the womb; from the womb of my mother you have been my protector.

In you is my singing always; I have become like a wonder to many, but you are a strong helper.

Let my mouth be filled with praise, so that I may sing your glory; all the day your greatness.

Cast me not away in the time of old age; when my strength shall fail, do not forsake me.

For my enemies have spoken against me, and those who watched for my soul have taken counsel together.

Saying: "God has forsaken him; pursue him and seize him, for there is no one to rescue him."

O God, be not far from me; O my God, make haste to my help.

Let those who slander my soul be brought to nothing; let them be covered with shame and confusion who seek my ruin.

But I will hope always; and I will add to all your praise.

My mouth will announce your justice; your salvation all the day.

For I know not literature; I will enter into the powers of the Lord.

O Lord, I will be mindful of your justice alone.

You have taught me, O God, from my youth; and unto now I will declare your wondrous works.

And even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do not forsake me,

until I announce your arm to every generation that is to come.

Your power and your justice, O God, even to the highest great things that you have done.

O God, who is like you? How great are the troubles you have shown me, many and severe.

And turning, you have brought me to life, and brought me back again from the depths of the earth.

You have multiplied your magnificence; and turning to me, you have comforted me.

For I will also confess to you with vessels of praise, your truth, O God.

I will sing to you on the harp, O holy One of Israel.

My lips will rejoice when I will sing to you, and my soul which you have redeemed.

My tongue also will meditate on your justice all the day, when they will be confounded and put to shame who seek evils for 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. Today Christ is born for us; glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will.*

Psalm 71 *A Prayer for the King's Son*

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

O God, give your judgment to the king, and your justice to the king's son,

to judge your people in justice and your poor in judgment.

Let the mountains receive peace for the people, and the hills justice.

He will judge the poor of the people, and he will bring salvation to the sons of the poor, and he will humble the slanderer.

And he will continue as long as the sun and the moon, from generation to generation.

He will come down like rain upon a fleece, and like showers falling upon the earth.

In his days, justice will spring forth, and an abundance of peace, until the moon be taken away.

And he will rule from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth.

Before him the Ethiopians will prostrate; and his enemies will lick the ground.

The kings of Tarshish and the islands will offer gifts; the kings of the Arabians and of Sheba will bring gifts.

And all kings will adore him; all nations will serve him.

For he will rescue the poor man from the powerful, and the needy man who has no helper.

He will spare the poor and the indigent; and he will save the souls of the poor.

He will free their souls from usury and iniquity; and their name will be honorable in his sight.

And he will live and to him will be given of the gold of Arabia.

And they will always adore him; all day long they will bless him.

There will be a firmament on the earth, on the tops of the mountains; its fruit will be exalted above Lebanon.

And from the city they will flourish like the grass of the earth.

Let his name be blessed forever; his name endures before the sun.

And in him all the tribes of the earth will be blessed; all nations will magnify him.

Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things.

And blessed is the name of his majesty forever, and his majesty will be filled with all the earth.

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

FIRST READING: SCRIPTURE

ISAIAH 9:6-7

For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

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 Gregory of Nazianzus
Oration 38, On the Theophany

Christ Is Born

> Christ is born, glorify him. Christ comes from heaven, go and meet him. Christ descends to earth, let us be raised. Let all the world sing to the Lord; let the heavens rejoice and let the earth be glad for his sake who was first in heaven and is now on earth. Christ is here in the flesh, let us exult with trembling and with joy: with trembling because of our sins, with joy because of our hope. Once again the darkness is dispersed; once again light is created. Let the people who sat in the darkness of ignorance now see the great light of full knowledge. The old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. The letter gives way, the spirit gains the ascendancy. The shadows flee away, the truth comes in upon them. Christs is born of a virgin. O great wonder! The creator of time enters into time. He, who is without beginning, begins. He becomes what he was not, while remaining still what he was. This is the mystery of the Nativity.

TE DEUM

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CONCLUDING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, the good news of your birth was first proclaimed by angels. May the words of the church's prayer proclaim that same good news to our hearts; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

DISMISSAL

Let us praise the Lord.

And give him thanks.