

Daily Prayer

John Chrysostom

Wednesday, January 27, 2021

We enter into a time of quiet. We offer to God our selves and in the silence know that God embraces us as God's very own. We offer our hopes and our concerns through our prayers and in the silence listen for God. Today we hold in our prayers the ordinary moments in life—the trials and the joys—and we remember John Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople, Teacher of the Faith, 407.

We begin by saying

The Lord has given me the tongue of those who are taught,
that I may know how to sustain with a word him that is weary.

Isaiah 50.4

The First Reading

At the end of seven days, the word of the Lord came to me: Mortal, I have made you a sentinel for the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. If I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die', and you give them no warning, and do not speak to warn the wicked from their wicked way, in order to save their life, those wicked persons shall die for their iniquity; but their blood I will require at your hand. But if you warn the wicked, and they do not turn from their wickedness, or from their wicked way, they shall die for their iniquity; but you will have saved your life. Again, if the righteous turn from their righteousness and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumbling-block before them, they shall die; because you have not warned them, they shall die for their sin, and their righteous deeds that they have done shall not be remembered; but their blood I will require at your hand. If, however, you warn the righteous not to sin, and they do not sin, they shall surely live, because they took warning; and you will have saved your life.

Ezekiel 3.16-21

The Psalm

Happy are they who consider the poor and needy! *
the Lord will deliver them in the time of trouble.

The Lord preserves them and keeps them alive,
so that they may be happy in the land; *
he does not hand them over to the will of their enemies.

The Lord sustains them on their sickbed *
and ministers to them in their illness.

I said, "Lord, be merciful to me; *
heal me, for I have sinned against you."

My enemies are saying wicked things about me: *
"When will he die, and his name perish?"

Even if they come to see me, they speak empty words; *
their heart collects false rumours;
they go outside and spread them.

All my enemies whisper together about me *
and devise evil against me.

"A deadly thing," they say, "has fastened on him; *
he has taken to his bed and will never get up again."

Even my best friend, whom I trusted,
who broke bread with me, *
has lifted up his heel and turned against me.

But you, O Lord, be merciful to me and raise me up, *
and I shall repay them.

By this I know you are pleased with me, *
that my enemy does not triumph over me.

In my integrity you hold me fast, *
and shall set me before your face for ever.

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, *
from age to age. Amen. Amen.

Psalm 41

The Gospel Reading

'But before all this occurs, they will arrest you and persecute you; they will hand you over to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors because of my name. This will give you an opportunity to testify. So make up your minds not to prepare your defence in advance; for I will give you words and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to withstand or contradict.

Luke 21.12-15

We continue with the reflection that follows. In silence, we ask what the reading has to say to us today. Is there something in the reflection that draws us more deeply into the reading? What does God have to say to us? What do we have to ask God?

The Reflection

Steven Mackison

"Hell is a joke; finished, done with.

The fires are quenched because death itself has now been vanquished, taken prisoner...and yet it thought it was the jailer. It snatched a body from its cell and - lo - found not a corpse, but a God.

It gulped down the earth to consume its prize, and instead it gagged on heaven.

It seized what it saw, the corpse of a man and was crushed by what it failed to see, the body of a Christ."

These golden words from the golden mouth of St. John

Chrysostom's Easter Sermon in the year 399, just after he was made Archbishop of the empire's capital in Constantinople.

Because of his unequalled eloquence, John was named "Chrysostom" - "golden Mouth" - and that is how we have come to know him to this day.

John was born in Antioch in 349 to Greco-Syrian parents. His mother was a Christian and his father, an officer in the military, died soon after John's birth. Despite this setback, it was clear from an early age that John was bright, so off he went and studied rhetoric under Libanius - the most influential speaker and statesman of the time.

John was being prepared for a life at court, to serve as a politician. In fact, he was such an outstanding student that Libanius said that he would have named John as his successor "if the Christians had not taken him from us." As it turns out, God was preparing John for another kind of service to another kind of Kingdom.

John's early life was one of words, but as his faith deepened he came to realize how empty even golden words were unless they were matched with sterling deeds. He began "living" his faith, rather than just preaching it shortly after his baptism.

In 375, John went into the wilderness, like Jesus, and spent the next two years as a hermit. He lived a life of self-denial. He barely ate, he scarcely slept, committing his waking hours to praying and memorizing scripture. However, he soon came to realize that he was not called to a solitary life, but to a life in community, especially in service to the poor and the hungry. After he became Archbishop of Constantinople, his preferential treatment for the poor won him much admiration, but it also earned him many enemies among the privileged and the powerful. So as it was with Jesus, John's enemies trumped up false charges and put him on trial.

He spent the next few remaining years of his life being yo-yoed in and out of exile, and died as a result of that experience. But despite his short time, as a pillar of the church and an advocate for

the poor, he left faithful words that would echo throughout the generations.

He left us a prayer, that he wrote while he was in exile, at a time when he had just a few friends and followers to keep the faith with him.

“Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication to you; and you have promised through your well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name you will hear their requests: Fulfill now, O Lord, our desires and petitions as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of your truth, and in the age to come life everlasting. Amen.”

As we remember John Chrysostom today, we give thanks not just for his golden words and lasting prayers, but his timeless commitment to living the faith he preached.

When the time is right, we conclude our time of silence with the canticle

The Canticle ~ A Song from Ezekiel

I will take you from the nations,
and gather you from every country,
and bring you home to your own land.

I will pour clean water upon you,
purify you from all defilement,
and cleanse you from all your idols.

A new heart I will give you,
and put a new spirit within you;
I will take from your body the heart of stone
and give you a heart of flesh.

I will put my spirit within you,

make you walk in my ways
and observe my decrees.

You shall dwell in the land
I gave to your forebears;
you shall be my people
and I will be your God.

Ezekiel 36.24-28

*We continue in prayer for those people and situations that we hold up before God (The Intercessions)
and continue with the concluding collect, the Lord's prayer and the closing sentences.*

The Intercessions

Let us pray to God,
who alone makes us dwell in safety:

For all who are affected by coronavirus,
through illness or isolation or anxiety,
that they may find relief and recovery:
Lord, hear us,
Lord, graciously hear us.

For those who are guiding our nation at this time,
and shaping national policies,
that they may make wise decisions:
Lord, hear us,
Lord, graciously hear us.

For doctors, nurses and medical researchers,
that through their skill and insights
many will be restored to health:
Lord, hear us,
Lord, graciously hear us.

For the vulnerable and the fearful,
for the gravely ill and the dying,

that they may know your comfort and peace:

Lord, hear us,

Lord, graciously hear us.

We commend ourselves, and all for whom we pray,
to the mercy and protection of God.

Merciful Father,

accept these prayers

for the sake of your Son,

our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Our prayers conclude

O God, you gave a golden eloquence to your servant John
that he might declare your justice

before the face of the proud and mighty.

Grant us, after his example,

such faithfulness to your word,

that we may strengthen the hearts of the weary

and sustain those who are afflicted by wrong;

through Jesus Christ our Lord,

who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,

one God, now and for ever.

[let us pray as our Saviour taught us,]

Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins,

as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen

We conclude

May the light of the glorious gospel of Christ
shine in our hearts and fill our lives
with his joy and peace.

Credits:

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The Intercessions: Church of England: Coronavirus Resources www.churchofengland.org

The Collect: *For All the Saints Prayers* © 2007, General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada

The Concluding Sentence: Common Worship: Times and Seasons—Epiphany (adapted). © The Archbishops' Council 2005 and published by Church House Publishing.

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