

Daily Prayer

Gregory of Nyssa

Wednesday, March 9, 2022

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 remember Gregory of Nyssa, Bishop and teacher of the faith, c. 395.

We begin by saying

O God, make speed to save us.

O Lord, make haste to help us.

Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear to my cry;

hold not your peace at my tears.

The First Reading

For wisdom is more mobile than any motion;
because of her pureness she pervades and penetrates all things.
For she is a breath of the power of God,
and a pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty;
therefore nothing defiled gains entrance into her.
For she is a reflection of eternal light,
a spotless mirror of the working of God,
and an image of his goodness.
Although she is but one, she can do all things,
and while remaining in herself, she renews all things;
in every generation she passes into holy souls
and makes them friends of God, and prophets;
for God loves nothing so much as the person who lives with wisdom.

Wisdom 7.24-28

The Psalm

'In the scroll of the book it is written of me
that I should do your will, O my God; ♦
I delight to do it: your law is within my heart.'

I have declared your righteousness in the great
congregation; ♦
behold, I did not restrain my lips,
and that, O Lord, you know.

Your righteousness I have not hidden in my heart;
I have spoken of your faithfulness and your salvation; ♦
I have not concealed your loving-kindness and truth
from the great congregation.

Do not withhold your compassion from me, O Lord; ♦
let your love and your faithfulness always preserve me,

For innumerable troubles have come about me;
my sins have overtaken me so that I cannot look up; ♦
they are more in number than the hairs of my head,
and my heart fails me.

Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me; ♦
O Lord, make haste to help me.

Psalm 40.9-14

The Gospel Reading

'Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling-places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am

going.’ Thomas said to him, ‘Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?’ Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.’

Philip said to him, ‘Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, “Show us the Father”? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves.

John 14.1-11

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

From For All the Saints

In the fourth century, a Greek-speaking family in Asia Minor produced a whole clan of saints. One member of this family was Basil the Great, whom we commemorate on January second. Today we commemorate his younger brother Gregory, who became bishop of Nyssa.

Gregory did not start out by following in his brother’s footsteps. On the contrary, he seems to have felt oppressed by the sanctity which surrounded him at home and chose to pursue a career as a lawyer and teacher of rhetoric. But in the year 371 his older brother pushed him into becoming the bishop of a small town called Nyssa. Before long Gregory’s enemies trumped up a charge of embezzlement

against him, and he fled from his diocese. Their perjury was eventually exposed, and he returned to Nyssa in triumph.

In the meantime, he had suffered two bereavements. His brother Basil died, leaving Gregory regretful over the history of their strained relations. Soon afterwards, his older sister Macrina also died. But before her death, while Gregory was nursing her, brother and sister had long conversations about the Christian faith and how Christians should live. These conversations had such an influence upon Gregory that ever afterwards he called Macrina "my teacher."

Gregory came out of these experiences with a new sense of purpose. He took up his pen to continue the theological work which his brother had left unfinished, and he began to emerge as a spiritual teacher in his own right.

Gregory lived in a mountainous part of Asia Minor, and he envisaged the Christian's life with God as if it were a journey up one of these crags. In his view, however, the ascent never ended, because the human movement towards God must be as infinite as the divine goodness which made it possible. This vision, expressed in Greek prose of remarkable beauty, has nourished the spirituality of Eastern Orthodoxy ever since.

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

The Canticle ~ A Song of Peace

*Spirit of God, teach us your ways,
that we may walk in the paths of peace.*

Come, let us go up to the mountain of God, ♦
to the house of the God of Jacob;
That God may teach us his ways, ♦
and that we may walk in his paths.

For the law shall go out from Zion, ♦
and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.
God shall judge between the nations, ♦
and shall mediate for many peoples.
They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, ♦
and their spears into pruning hooks.
Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, ♦
neither shall they learn war any more.
O people of Jacob, come: ♦
let us walk in the light of the Lord.
Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.
*Spirit of God, teach us your ways,
that we may walk in the paths of peace.*

Isaiah 2.3-5

*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

For the one holy catholic and apostolic Church throughout the world, we pray to you, Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the mission of the Church, that in faithful witness it may preach the gospel to the ends of the earth, we pray to you, Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For those preparing for baptism, for our catechumens and for their teachers and sponsors, we pray to you, Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For peace in the world, that a spirit of respect and reconciliation may grow among nations and peoples, we pray to you, Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the poor, the persecuted, the sick, and all who suffer; for refugees, prisoners, and all in danger; that they may be relieved and protected, we pray to you, Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For all whom we have injured or offended, we pray to you, Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For grace to amend our lives and to further the reign of God, we pray to you, Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

Our prayers conclude

Eternal God,
you formed your servant Gregory of Nyssa
according to the knowledge of your goodness
so that he taught your faithful people
the way of ascent into your glory.
Give us grace to love his doctrine,
that in holiness we may approach your throne
and in glad thanksgiving embrace your mercy;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives 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

This is love, not that we loved God.
But that he loved us and sent his Son.
He is the sacrifice for our sins,
that we might live through him.
If God loves us so much
we ought to love one another.
If we love one another
God lives in us.

Credits:

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The Intercessions: Book of Alternative Services © 1985, The General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada

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

The Concluding Sentence: Common Worship: Lent © The Archbishops' Council 2005 and published by Church House Publishing.

The reflection: For All the Saints

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