

Daily Prayer

Ambrose, Bishop of Milan

Wednesday, December 7, 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 we remember Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, Teacher of the Faith, 397.

We begin by saying

O Lord, open our lips

and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Reveal among us the light of your presence

that we may behold your power and glory.

The First Reading

As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. For he says,

'At an acceptable time I have listened to you,
and on a day of salvation I have helped you.'

See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labours, sleepless nights, hunger; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; in honour and dishonour, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet are well known; as

dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

We have spoken frankly to you Corinthians; our heart is wide open to you. There is no restriction in our affections, but only in yours. In return—I speak as to children—open wide your hearts also.

2 Corinthians 6.1-13

The Psalm

To behold the fair beauty of the Lord ♦
and to seek his will in his temple.

For in the day of trouble
he shall hide me in his shelter; ♦
in the secret place of his dwelling shall he hide me
and set me high upon a rock.

And now shall he lift up my head ♦
above my enemies round about me;

Therefore will I offer in his dwelling an oblation
with great gladness; ♦
I will sing and make music to the Lord.

Hear my voice, O Lord, when I call; ♦
have mercy upon me and answer me.

My heart tells of your word, 'Seek my face.' ♦
Your face, Lord, will I seek.

Hide not your face from me, ♦
nor cast your servant away in displeasure.

Psalm 27.5-11

The Gospel Reading

'Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit; be like those who are waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, so that they may open the door for him as soon as he comes and knocks. Blessed are those slaves whom the master finds alert when he comes; truly I tell you, he will fasten his belt and have them sit down to eat, and he will come and serve them. And the Lord said, 'Who then is the faithful and prudent manager whom his master will put in charge of his slaves, to give them their allowance of food at the proper time? Blessed is that slave whom his master will find at work when he arrives. Truly I tell you, he will put that one in charge of all his possessions.

Luke 12.35-37, 42-44

In silence, we ask what the readings have to say to us today. Is there something that draws us more deeply into the reading? What does God have to say to us? What do we have to ask God?

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

The Canticle ~ A Song of the Wilderness

Lift up your voice with strength,
O herald of good tidings.

The wilderness and the dry land shall rejoice, ♦
the desert shall blossom and burst into song.

They shall see the glory of the Lord, ♦
the majesty of our God.

Strengthen the weary hands, ♦
and make firm the feeble knees.

Say to the anxious, 'Be strong, fear not,
your God is coming with judgement, ♦
coming with judgement to save you.'

Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, ♦
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;
Then shall the lame leap like a hart, ♦
and the tongue of the dumb sing for joy.
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, ♦
and streams in the desert;
The ransomed of the Lord shall return with singing, ♦
with everlasting joy upon their heads.
Joy and gladness shall be theirs, ♦
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Isaiah 35.1,2b-4a,4c-6,10

*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.*
Lift up your voice with strength,
O herald of good tidings.

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

The Intercessions

Watchful at all times,
let us pray for strength to stand with confidence
before our Maker and Redeemer.
That God may bring in his kingdom with justice and mercy,
let us pray to the Lord:
Lord, have mercy.

That God may establish among the nations
his sceptre of righteousness,
let us pray to the Lord:
Lord, have mercy.

That we may seek Christ in the Scriptures
and recognize him in the breaking of the bread,
let us pray to the Lord:
Lord, have mercy.

That God may bind up the brokenhearted,
restore the sick
and raise up all who have fallen,
let us pray to the Lord:
Lord, have mercy.

That the light of God's coming may dawn
on all who live in darkness and the shadow of death,
let us pray to the Lord:
Lord, have mercy.

That, with all the saints in light,
we may shine forth as lights for the world,
let us pray to the Lord:
Lord, have mercy.

We commend ourselves and all for whom we pray
to the mercy and protection of our heavenly Father:
Almighty God,
as your blessed Son Jesus Christ
first came to seek and to save the lost;
so may he come again to find in us
the completion of his redeeming work;
for he is now alive
and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
God for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Our prayers conclude

God of grace and faithfulness,
by the power of your Word
your holy servant Ambrose
subdued the fury of princes
and sustained the faith of your people.
Remember us in our needs
and grant us strength in our weaknesses,
that we may serve you with confidence
and rejoice in your mighty salvation;
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 Christ our Saviour give us peace.
Amen.

Ambrose

Bishop of Milan, Teacher of the Faith, 397—Memorial

Ambrose was bishop of Milan and a great champion of the Catholic faith during the last quarter of the fourth century. His election as bishop in the year 374 appeared to be a fluke of providence. Ambrose was the imperial governor of northern Italy, when rival factions in the church of Milan began to fight one another over the election of a new bishop. He called the people together and mustered all his eloquence in urging them to keep the peace. Suddenly, from the very back of the crowd, a child's voice was heard to cry: "Ambrose for bishop! Ambrose for bishop!" The whole crowd took up the cry — much to the horror and embarrassment of Ambrose himself, for he was not yet baptized. The crowd would not listen to his protests and a week later, after a hurried baptism, he was ordained bishop of Milan.

Ambrose became a convinced advocate of the Church party which confessed the true divinity of Christ. His position brought him into conflict with the emperor, who sympathized with the opposing party. At one point the emperor had his legion of bodyguards surround the basilica of Milan while Ambrose and his congregation were celebrating the liturgy. It looked as if they would all be massacred, but Ambrose kept up his people's courage by preaching to them and leading them in the singing of psalms and hymns. At nightfall the emperor finally ordered his troops to withdraw. This event gave Ambrose enormous prestige, which continued into the reign of the next emperor. When the people of Thessalonika were massacred on imperial orders, Ambrose excommunicated the emperor himself and compelled him to do public penance for his atrocity.

Because of his orthodoxy and his courage in speaking up for the oppressed, Ambrose became a hero of the western Church long before his death in 397. These same qualities are the reason why we still honour him to this day, which is the anniversary of his ordination as bishop of Milan.

Credits:

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