

Daily Prayer

Holy Women of the Old Testament

Wednesday, August 16, 2023

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. We begin by saying

O God, make speed to save us.

O Lord, make haste to help us.

Make me to know your ways, O Lord,
and teach me your paths.

The First Reading

Hannah prayed and said,

'My heart exults in the LORD;

my strength is exalted in my God.

My mouth derides my enemies,

because I rejoice in my victory.

'There is no Holy One like the LORD,

no one besides you;

there is no Rock like our God.

Talk no more so very proudly,

let not arrogance come from your mouth;

for the LORD is a God of knowledge,

and by him actions are weighed.

The bows of the mighty are broken,

but the feeble gird on strength.

Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread,

but those who were hungry are fat with spoil.

The barren has borne seven,
but she who has many children is forlorn.
The LORD kills and brings to life;
he brings down to Sheol and raises up.
The LORD makes poor and makes rich;
he brings low, he also exalts.
He raises up the poor from the dust;
he lifts the needy from the ash heap,
to make them sit with princes
and inherit a seat of honour.
For the pillars of the earth are the LORD's,
and on them he has set the world.
'He will guard the feet of his faithful ones,
but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness;
for not by might does one prevail.
The LORD! His adversaries shall be shattered;
the Most High will thunder in heaven.
The LORD will judge the ends of the earth;
he will give strength to his king,
and exalt the power of his anointed.'

1 Samuel 2.1-10

The Psalm

You sent down a gracious rain, O God; ♦
you refreshed your inheritance when it was weary.
Your people came to dwell there; ♦
in your goodness, O God, you provide for the poor.
The Lord gave the word;
great was the company of women who bore the tidings: ♦
'Kings and their armies they flee, they flee!'
and women at home are dividing the spoil.

Though you stayed among the sheepfolds, ♦
see now a dove's wings covered with silver
and its feathers with green gold.

When the Almighty scattered the kings, ♦
it was like snowflakes falling on Zalmon.

Psalm 68.9-13

The Gospel Reading

There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband for seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshipped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favour of God was upon him.

Luke 2.36-40

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 Wisdom

Send Wisdom forth from your holy heavens;
from the throne of your glory
send what is pleasing to you.

O God of our ancestors and Lord of mercy, ♦
you have made all things by your word.

By your wisdom you have formed us ♦
to have dominion over the creatures you have made;
To rule the world in holiness and righteousness ♦
and to pronounce judgement in uprightness of soul.
Give us the Wisdom that sits by your throne; ♦
do not reject us from among your servants,
For we are your servants, ♦
with little understanding of judgement and laws.
Even one who is perfect among us ♦
will be regarded as nothing
without the wisdom that comes from you.
With you is Wisdom, she who knows your works, ♦
and was present when you made the world.
She understands what is pleasing in your sight ♦
and what is right according to your commandments.
Send her forth from the holy heavens, ♦
from the throne of your glory send her.
That she may labour at our side ♦
and that we may learn what is pleasing to you.
For she knows and understands all things, ♦
she will guide us wisely in our actions
and guard us with her glory.

Wisdom 9.1-5a,c,6,9-11

*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.*

Send Wisdom forth from your holy heavens;
from the throne of your glory
send what is pleasing to you.

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

In peace, let us pray to Jesus our Lord,
who ever lives to make intercession for us.

Saviour of the world,
be present in all places of suffering, violence and pain,
and bring hope even in the darkest night.
Inspire us to continue your work of reconciliation today.
In peace we pray.

Lord of the Church,
empower by your Spirit the work of your Church in every land.
Give us grace to proclaim the gospel joyfully in word and deed.
In peace we pray.

Shepherd and Guardian of our souls,
guide and enable all who lead and serve this community
and those on whom we depend for our daily needs.
Grant that we may seek the peace and welfare of this place.
In peace we pray.

Great Physician,
stretch out your hand to bring comfort, wholeness and peace
to all who suffer in body, mind, or spirit.
Fill us with compassion, that we may be channels of your healing
love.
In peace we pray.

Conqueror of death,
remember for good those whom we love but see no longer.
Help us to live this day in the sure and certain hope of your eternal
victory.
In peace we pray.

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

Our prayers conclude

Blessed are you, Lord, God of our mothers,
for you raised up generations of holy women
in the house of your people Israel
that they might preserve the way of your covenant.
Grant us a measure of their faith,
that we may be unafraid of rulers in their might
and strong in our hope of your vindication;
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 God grant to the world justice, truth and peace.
Amen.

Holy Women of the Old Testament

Memorial

When the Church honours the Blessed Virgin Mary, it is often inclined to view her in isolation and to forget that she was a Hebrew woman. The evangelists, especially Saint Luke, did not make this mistake, but saw her in the light of a long line of women mentioned in the Hebrew Scriptures — Sarah, whose husband was Abraham; Miriam, the sister of Moses; Deborah, one of the Judges of Israel; Hannah, the mother of Samuel; Ruth, the legendary grandmother of King David; Bathsheba, the wife of David and the mother of Solomon; the widow of Zar'ephath, who trusted the prophet Elijah and received mercy in the time of her grief; and the mother of the Maccabean martyrs, who encouraged them to keep faith with God and perished with them because she would not join in pagan sacrifices.

These women all had one thing in common: they were people who first appear as living on the edges of their society. For instance, Sarah and Hannah suffered the reproach of being childless in a culture which counted a woman's worth by the number of children she bore; while Ruth, Bathsheba, and the widow of Zar'ephath were all foreigners in Israel, women from other nations which worshipped other gods. But all became the vessels of God's mercy and crucial symbols of the salvation that God sought to make for Israel. Indeed, the very fact that they came from the edges of society made them bearers of Israel's truth before God. For Israel itself was a society on the edges of the world, a nation easily scorned by the more powerful kingdoms round about, repeatedly invaded and oppressed. What set Israel apart was, of course, its covenant with the one true God — and its tenacity in faithfulness to this covenant. Thus, the holy women of the Old Testament symbolized Israel's faithfulness to God in a hostile world. For just as each was vindicated for her faith in the God of Israel, so they became models of Israel's vocation and living testimonies to the vindicating power of God. That is why we specially remember these holy women today.

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