

Daily Prayer

Nicholas, Bishop of Myra

Wednesday, December 6, 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 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

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Saviour of the world.

1 John 4.7-14

The Psalm

The Lord turns rivers into wilderness ♦
and water springs into thirsty ground;
A fruitful land he makes a salty waste, ♦
because of the wickedness of those who dwell there.
He makes the wilderness a pool of water ♦
and water springs out of a thirsty land.
There he settles the hungry ♦
and they build a city to dwell in.
They sow fields and plant vineyards ♦
and bring in a fruitful harvest.
He blesses them, so that they multiply greatly; ♦
he does not let their herds of cattle decrease.
He pours contempt on princes ♦
and makes them wander in trackless wastes.
They are diminished and brought low, ♦
through stress of misfortune and sorrow,
But he raises the poor from their misery ♦
and multiplies their families like flocks of sheep.
The upright will see this and rejoice, ♦
but all wickedness will shut its mouth.
Whoever is wise will ponder these things ♦
and consider the loving-kindness of the Lord.

Psalm 107.33-43

The Gospel Reading

People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, 'Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.' And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

Mark 10.13-16

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, saying
Show us your mercy
And grant us your salvation.

That God may establish among the nations
his sceptre of righteousness,
Show us your mercy
And grant us your salvation.

That we may seek Christ in the Scriptures
and recognize him in the breaking of the bread,
Show us your mercy
And grant us your salvation.

That God may bind up the broken-hearted, restore the sick
and raise up all who have fallen,
Show us your mercy
And grant us your salvation.

That the light of God's coming may dawn
on all who live in darkness and the shadow of death,
Show us your mercy
And grant us your salvation.

That, with all the saints in light,
we may shine forth as lights for the world,
Show us your mercy
And grant us your salvation.

We commend ourselves and all for whom we pray
to the mercy and protection of maker and redeemer:
Show us your mercy
And grant us your salvation.

Our prayers conclude

Eternal God,
in your great love
you gave to your servant Nicholas
a perpetual name for deeds of kindness on land and sea.
Grant that your Church may never cease to work
for the happiness of children,
the safety of sailors,
the relief of the poor
and the help of those who are tossed
by tempests of doubt or grief;
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

May the Lord, when he comes,
find us watching and waiting.

Amen.

Nicholas

Bishop of Myra, c. 342—Commemoration

Nicholas was a fourth-century bishop of Myra, a town in what is now southwestern Turkey, and we remember him because of the stories which have given him “a perpetual name for deeds of kindness on land and sea.”

Nothing certain is known about his life, but the people of the Church held him in high honour from a very early date and many stories came to be told about him. The most famous of these legends tells of his merciful generosity. Once there were three sisters whose parents were so poor that they thought of selling them. Bishop Nicholas heard of the sisters' plight and tossed three bags of gold onto their doorstep — thus providing them with dowries for marriage and saving them from a life of prostitution. That is why he is considered the special protector of children. In memory of his deed of mercy to the three sisters, the Dutch developed the custom of giving gifts to children on his feast-day. They brought this custom to America, where it became associated with Christmas rather than the feast of Nicholas — and where “Sant Nikolaas” was changed into “Santa Claus.”

Another story tells how a company of seafarers were caught in a storm off the coast of Asia Minor. The waves were swamping their ship, and the mariners were nearly at their wits' end when they remembered what they had heard about the bishop of Myra. Though he was still alive, the sailors cried out his name and implored his help. The legend says that Nicholas himself suddenly appeared in the rigging of their ship and calmed the storm, so that the ship and all who were in it came safely to port.

Nicholas is considered the patron saint of many other groups besides children and sailors. The common thread in all these claims on his heavenly protection is his legendary kindness to those in need — and his special care of those who follow his storied example by aiding the desperate, the needy, and the sick.

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