

Daily Prayer

St John, Apostle and Evangelist

Wednesday, December 27, 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.

You laid the foundation of the earth

and the heavens are the work of your hands.

The First Reading

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day. The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

And God said, 'Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.' And it was so. God made

the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

Genesis 1.1-5, 12-19

The Psalm

It is a good thing to give thanks to the Lord ♦
and to sing praises to your name, O Most High;

To tell of your love early in the morning ♦
and of your faithfulness in the night-time,

My eyes will look down on my foes; ♦
my ears shall hear the ruin of the evildoers
who rise up against me.

The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree, ♦
and shall spread abroad like a cedar of Lebanon.

Such as are planted in the house of the Lord ♦
shall flourish in the courts of our God.

They shall still bear fruit in old age; ♦
they shall be vigorous and in full leaf;

Psalm 92.1-2, 11-14

The Gospel Reading

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them,

'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.' Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went towards the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed;

John 20.1-8

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 Messiah

To us a child is born,
to us a son is given.

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great
light; ♦
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,
upon them the light has dawned.

You have increased their joy and given them great
gladness; ♦
they rejoiced before you as with joy at the harvest.

For you have shattered the yoke that burdened them; ♦
the collar that lay heavy on their shoulders.

For to us a child is born and to us a son is given, ♦
and the government will be upon his shoulder.

And his name will be called: Wonderful Counsellor;
the Mighty God; ♦

the Everlasting Father; the Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of his government and of peace ♦
there will be no end,

Upon the throne of David and over his kingdom, ♦
to establish and uphold it with justice and righteousness.

From this time forth and for evermore; ♦
the zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Isaiah 9.2,3b,4a,6,7

*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.*

To us a child is born,
to us a son is given.

*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

Let us pray to our incarnate Lord,
who has brought us out of darkness
and into his own marvellous light.

Christ born for us,

Son of God given for us:

help us to know you,

to worship and to serve you ...

Lord, in your mercy

hear our prayer.

Wonderful counsellor,
you order all things with your wisdom:
help the Church to reveal the mystery of your love
and fill her with the Spirit of truth ...
Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer.

Mighty God,
the government is on your shoulders:
guide the leaders of the nations
and bring in your kingdom of justice and righteousness ...
Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer.

Everlasting Father,
you call us to live together in unity:
protect by your mercy all your children,
bless our families and renew our communities ...
Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer.

Prince of peace,
you bring reconciliation through the cross:
by your healing power give to all who suffer ...
your gift of wholeness and peace.
Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer.

Lord Jesus Christ,
Son of the Father,
full of the Spirit,
**hear our prayer,
receive our praises,
fill our lives. Amen.**

Our prayers conclude

Lord God,
in the Incarnation of your Son
the word of life, which was from the beginning,
is made visible to human eyes,
audible to human ears
and tangible to human hands.
By his fellowship with us,
so strengthen us in all that we do,
that through our words and through our lives
your love would be made manifest again to the world,
and all peoples would live together in fellowship with you,
that our joy would be complete in Jesus Christ our Lord

[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, who has called us out of darkness
into his marvellous light,
bless us and fill us with peace. **Amen.**

John

Apostle and Evangelist—Holy Day

Today we honour Saint John the Apostle, a Galilean fisherman who was called with his brother James and followed Jesus to become “a fisher for people.”

John and his brother were so impetuous in their behaviour that Jesus nicknamed them “Bo-aner’ges” or “Sons of thunder.” Nevertheless, with Peter and James, he was one of the three disciples that Jesus chose to have with him on those occasions when he wanted people he could trust. This side of John’s character is heightened if he was “the beloved disciple” mentioned in the Fourth Gospel — the disciple who lay closest to Jesus at the Last Supper and into whose care the crucified Lord entrusted his mother. According to the Book of Acts, John later became a pillar of the church at Jerusalem and shared the leadership with Peter.

A reliable tradition says that John eventually settled at Ephesus, a city on the Mediterranean coast of Asia Minor. There he superintended the Church and gathered a lively circle of students, who had great influence on Christian life and thought throughout the region. Out of this “community of the beloved disciple” came the Gospel and the three Letters which are attributed to John in the New Testament. These writings display a side of John which we would not expect from the other accounts of him. Instead of the impulsive “Son of thunder,” the Gospel and Letters of John reflect the mind of a fine theologian who meditated deeply on the mystery of Christ and expressed his understanding in a poetical manner.

Many scholars have argued that John the fisherman-apostle and John the theologian-evangelist were really two different people. It has even been shown that the text of John’s Gospel passed through the hands of several editors before it reached the form in which we now know it. But scholars have also recognized that “the Johannine tradition” gives independent information about events in Jesus’ life which may be more accurate than some of the information available in the other three gospels. This suggests that the recollections and teachings of John, the fisherman turned apostle, did indeed provide the basis for the New Testament writings which bear his name.

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