

Daily Prayer

Christmas Feria

Wednesday, January 3, 2024

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

See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

Everyone who commits sin is guilty of lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. You know that he was revealed to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. No one who abides in him sins; no one who sins has either seen him or known him.

1 John 3.1-6

The Psalm

Sing to the Lord a new song, ♦
for he has done marvellous things.

His own right hand and his holy arm ♦
have won for him the victory.

He has remembered his mercy and faithfulness
towards the house of Israel, ♦
and all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our
God.

Sound praises to the Lord, all the earth; ♦
break into singing and make music.

Make music to the Lord with the lyre, ♦
with the lyre and the voice of melody.

With trumpets and the sound of the horn ♦
sound praises before the Lord, the King.

Psalm 98.1-2, 4-7

The Gospel Reading

The next day John saw Jesus coming towards him and declared, 'Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, "After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was before me." I myself did not know him; but I came baptizing with water for this reason, that he might be revealed to Israel.' And John testified, 'I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, "He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit." And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God.'

John 1.29-34

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,6a7

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

From the rising of the sun to its setting, let us pray to the Lord.

That the people of God in all the world
may worship in spirit and in truth,

let us pray to the Lord.

Lord hear our prayer.

That the Church may discover again that unity which is the
Father's will,

let us pray to the Lord.

Lord hear our prayer.

That the nations of the earth
may seek after the ways that make for peace,

let us pray to the Lord.

Lord hear our prayer.

That the whole creation, groaning in travail,
may be set free to enjoy the glorious liberty of the children of God,

let us pray to the Lord.

Lord hear our prayer.

That all who with Christ have entered the shadow of death
may rest in peace and rise in glory,

let us pray to the Lord.

Lord hear our prayer.

Let us commend the world, to which Christ showed the way,
to the mercy and protection of God.

Our prayers conclude

God of peace,

in whose love our hope of rest abides.

Be present with us in the changes and anxieties of this earthly life
and, through the compassion you give us for others,
enable us to hold before them the light of hope
and the reassurance of support and fellowship in times of difficulty,
through 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.

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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