

Liturgy of the Hours
LITURGY OF THE HOURS

OFFICE OF READINGS

December 22, 2024

{ Fourth Sunday of Advent }



Stand and make sign of cross

God, come to my assistance.

— Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now,
and will be for ever. Amen. Alleluia.

HYMN

Redeemer of the nations, come;
reveal yourself by virgin birth.
Let ev'ry age with wonder know
that such a birth befits our God.

Conceived not from the seed of man
but by the Spirit's wondrous breath,
the Word of God is now made flesh,
as Mary's womb brings forth its fruit.

The Virgin's womb grows great with child,
this cloister is for ever pure;
the banners of her virtues gleam,
for in this temple God resides.

From bridal chamber let him come,
from royal Virgin, palace chaste,
with twofold nature God and man,
a champion swift to run his course.

The eternal Father's Equal, come,
bind on the trophy of our flesh,
and strengthen with your lasting pow'r
the weakness of our mortal frame.

Your manger now with splendor shines
and night breathes forth new radiant light,
which no night may corrupt or dim:
so let it shine through constant faith.

To you, O Christ, most loving King,

and to the Father, glory be,
one with the Spirit Paraclete,
from age to age for evermore. Amen.

*Metrical hymn, melody: Breslau, 8 8 8 8; first appeared in As Hymnodus Sacer,
Leipzig, 1625, adapted by Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, 1809–1847*

*Plainsong, mode II, melody 46; Liber Hymnarius, Solesmes, 1983; Text: Veni,
redemptor gentium, St. Ambrose, 340–397*

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Sit or stand

PSALMODY

Antiphon 1

This is our heavenly King, he comes with power and might to save
the nations, alleluia.

Psalm 24

The Lord's entry into his temple

Christ opened heaven for us in the manhood he assumed (St. Irenaeus).

The Lórd's is the éarth and its fúllness, *
the wórld and áll its péoples.
It is hé who sét it on the séas; *
on the wáters he máde it firm.

Who shall clímb the móuntain of the Lórd? *
Who shall stánd in his hólý pláce?
The mán with clean hánds and pure héart, †
who desíres not wóorthless thínghs, *
who has not swórn so as to decéive his néíghbor.

He shall recéive bléssings from the Lórd *
and rewárd from the Gód who sáves him.
Súch are the mén who séek him, *

seek the fáce of the Gód of Jácob.

O gátes, lift hígh your héads; †
grow hígher, áncient dóors. *

Let him énter, the kíng of glóry!

Whó is the kíng of glóry? †
The Lórd, the míghty, the váliant, *
the Lórd, the váliant in wár.

O gátes, lift hígh your héads; †
grow hígher, áncient dóors. *
Let him énter, the kíng of glóry!

Who is hé, the kíng of glóry? †
Hé, the Lórd of ármies, *
hé is the kíng of glóry.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, *
and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, *
and will be for ever. Amen.

Antiphon

This is our heavenly King, he comes with power and might to save the nations, alleluia.

Antiphon 2

Daughter of Jerusalem, rejoice and be glad; your King will come to you. Zion, do not fear; your Savior hastens on his way.

Psalm 66

Eucharistic hymn

The Lord is risen and all people have been brought by him to the Father (Hesychius).

I

Cry out with jóy to Gód, all the éarth, *
O síng to the glóry of his náme.
O rénder him glórious práise. *
Say to Gód: “How treméndous your déeds!
Because of the gréatness of your stréngth *

your énemies crínge befóre you.
Befóre you all the éarth shall bów; *
shall síng to you, síng to your náme!”

Come and sée the wórks of Gód, *
treméndous his déeds among mén.
He túrned the séa into dry lánd, *
they pássed through the ríver dry-shód.

Let our jóy then bé in hím; *
he rúles for éver by his míght.
His éyes keep wátch over the nátions; *
let rébels not ríse agáinst him.

O péoples, bléss our Gód, *
let the vóice of his práise resound,
of the Gód who gave lífe to our sóuls *
and képt our féet from stúmbling.

For yóu, O Gód, have tésted us, *
you have tríed us as sílver is tríed:
you léd us, Gód, into the snáre; *
you láid a heavy búrden on our bácks.

You lét men ríde over our héads; †
we wént through fíre and through wáter *
but thén you bróught us relíef.

Glory to the Fátter, and to the Son, *
and to the Holy Spírít:
as it was in the begínning, is now, *
and will be for éver. Amen.

Antiphon

Daughter of Jerusalem, rejoice and be glad; your King will come to you. Zion, do not fear; your Savior hastens on his way.

Antiphon 3

Let us cleanse our hearts for the coming of our great King, that we may be ready to welcome him; he is coming and will not delay.

II

Burnt offering I bring to your house;*
to you I will pay my vows,
the vows which my lips have uttered,*
which my mouth spoke in my distress.

I will offer burnt offerings of fatlings †
with the smoke of burning rams.*
I will offer bullocks and goats.

Come and hear, all who fear God.*
I will tell what he did for my soul:
to him I cried aloud,*
with high praise ready on my tongue.

If there had been evil in my heart,*
the Lord would not have listened.
But truly God has listened,*
he has heeded the voice of my prayer.

Blessed be God who did not reject my prayer*
nor withhold his love from me.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son,*
and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now,*
and will be for ever. Amen.

Antiphon

Let us cleanse our hearts for the coming of our great King, that we may be ready to welcome him; he is coming and will not delay.

VERSE

Hear the word of the Lord, all you nations.

— Proclaim it to the ends of the earth.

Sit

READINGS

First reading

From the book of the prophet Isaiah

The restoration of Zion

Zion said, “The Lord has forsaken me;
my Lord has forgotten me.”

Can a mother forget her infant,
be without tenderness for the child of her womb?

Even should she forget,
I will never forget you.

See, upon the palms of my hands I have written your name;
your walls are ever before me.

Your rebuilders make haste,
as those who tore you down and laid you waste
go forth from you;

Look about and see,
they are all gathering and coming to you.

As I live, says the Lord,
you shall be arrayed with them all as with adornments,
like a bride you shall fasten them on you.

Though you were waste and desolate,
a land of ruins,

Now you shall be too small for your inhabitants,
while those who swallowed you up will be far away.

The children whom you had lost
shall yet say to you,

“This place is too small for me,
make room for me to live in.”

You shall ask yourself:

“Who has borne me these?

I was bereft and barren
(exiled and repudiated);
who has reared them?

I was left all alone;
where then do these come from?”

Thus says the Lord God:

See, I will lift up my hand to the nations,
and raise my signal to the peoples;

They shall bring your sons in their arms,
and your daughters shall be carried on their shoulders.
Kings shall be your foster fathers,
their princesses your nurses;
Bowling to the ground, they shall worship you
and lick the dust at your feet.
Then you shall know that I am the Lord,
and those who hope in me shall never be disappointed.

Thus says the Lord:
Can booty be taken from a warrior?
or captives be rescued from a tyrant?
Yes, captives can be taken from a warrior,
and booty be rescued from a tyrant;
Those who oppose you I will oppose,
and your sons I will save.

I will make your oppressors eat their own flesh,
and they shall be drunk with their own blood
as with the juice of the grape.
All mankind shall know
that I, the Lord, am your savior,
your redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.

Thus says the Lord:
Where is the bill of divorce
with which I dismissed your mother?
Or to which of my creditors
have I sold you?
It was for your sins that you were sold,
for your crimes that your mother was dismissed.

Responsory

Isaiah 49:15; see Psalm 27:10

Could a mother ever forget her infant, and not take compassion on
the child of her womb?

— Even if a mother should forget, I would never forget you,
says the Lord.

My father and my mother have neglected me, but you, Lord, have lifted me up.

— Even if a mother should forget, I would never forget you, says the Lord.

Second reading

From a commentary on Luke by Venerable Bede, priest

(Lib. 1, 46-55: CCL 120, 37-39)

The Magnificat

Mary said: My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

The Lord has exalted me by a gift so great, so unheard of, that language is useless to describe it; and the depths of love in my heart can scarcely grasp it. I offer then all the powers of my soul in praise and thanksgiving. As I contemplate his greatness, which knows no limits, I joyfully surrender my whole life, my senses, my judgment, for my spirit rejoices in the eternal Godhead of that Jesus, that Savior, whom I have conceived in this world of time.

The Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

Mary looks back to the beginning of her song, where she said: *My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord.* Only that soul for whom the Lord in his love does great things can proclaim his greatness with fitting praise and encourage those who share her desire and purpose, saying: *Join with me in proclaiming the greatness of the Lord; let us extol his name together.*

Those who know the Lord, yet refuse to proclaim his greatness and sanctify his name to the limit of their power, *will be considered the least in the kingdom of heaven.* His name is called holy because in the sublimity of his unique power he surpasses every creature and is far removed from all that he has made.

He has come to the help of his servant Israel for he has remembered his promise of mercy.

In a beautiful phrase Mary calls Israel the servant of the Lord. The Lord came to his aid to save him. Israel is an obedient and humble

servant, in the words of Hosea: *Israel was a servant, and I loved him.*

Those who refuse to be humble cannot be saved. They cannot say with the prophet: *See, God comes to my aid; the Lord is the helper of my soul.* But *anyone who makes himself humble like a little child is greater in the kingdom of heaven.*

The promise he made to our fathers, to Abraham and his children for ever.

This does not refer to the physical descendants of Abraham, but to his spiritual children. These are his descendants, sprung not from the flesh only, but who, whether circumcised or not, have followed him in faith. Circumcised as he was, Abraham believed, and this was credited to him as an act of righteousness.

The coming of the Savior was promised to Abraham and to his descendants for ever. These are the children of promise, to whom it is said: *If you belong to Christ, then you are descendants of Abraham, heirs in accordance with the promise.*

Responsory

Luke 1:48-50

From this day all generations will call me blessed.

— The Almighty has done great things for me, holy is his Name.

He has mercy on those who fear him in every generation.

— The Almighty has done great things for me, holy is his Name.

Stand

TE DEUM

You are God: we praise you;
You are the Lord: we acclaim you;
You are the eternal Father:
All creation worships you.

To you all angels, all the powers of heaven,
Cherubim and Seraphim, sing in endless praise:
Holy, holy, holy, Lord, God of power and might,

heaven and earth are full of your glory.

The glorious company of apostles praise you.

The noble fellowship of prophets praise you.

The white-robed army of martyrs praise you.

Throughout the world the holy Church acclaim you:

Father, of majesty unbounded,
your true and only Son, worthy of all worship,
and the Holy Spirit, advocate and guide.

You, Christ, are the King of glory,
the eternal Son of the Father.

When you became man to set us free
you did not spurn the Virgin's womb.

You overcame the sting of death,
and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

You are seated at God's right hand in glory.
We believe that you will come, and be our judge.

Come then, Lord, and help your people,
bought with the price of your own blood,
and bring us with your saints
to glory everlasting.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

Let us pray.

Lord,
fill our hearts with your love,
and as you revealed to us by an angel
the coming of your Son as man,
so lead us through his suffering and death
to the glory of his resurrection,
for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

— Amen.

Acclamation

Let us praise the Lord.

— And give him thanks.

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