

Tuesday of the Fourth Week of Advent

The Liturgical Year

Dom Prosper Gueranger

The Lord is now nigh; come, let us Adore.

From the Prophet Isaias. Chapter 42

Behold my servant, I will uphold him; my elect, my soul delights in him; I have given me spirit upon him, he shall bring forth judgement to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor have respect to person, neither shall his voice be heard abroad. The bruised reed he shall not break, and the smoking flax he shall not quench: he shall bring forth judgement unto truth. He shall not be sad, nor troublesome, till he set judgement in the earth: and the islands shall wait for his law. Thus says the Lord God that created the heavens, and stretched them out: that established the earth, and the things that spring out of it: that giveth breath to the people upon it, and spirit to them that tread thereon. I the Lord have called thee in justice, and taken thee by the hand, and preserved thee. And I have given thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles: that thou might open the eyes of the blind, and bring forth the prisoner out of prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.

How sweet and peaceful is Thy entrance into this world, Oh Jesus! Thy voice is not heard giving its commands; and Thy hands, the hands of a yet unborn Babe, seem too weak to break the reed, so frail, that a breath would break it. What is it Thou hast come to do in this first coming? Thy heavenly Father tells us by the prophet. Thou art coming that Thou mayst be the pledge of a covenant between heaven and earth. Oh divine Infant! Son of God, and yet Son of man, blessed be Thy coming among us! Thy crib will be the ark which will save us; and when Thou walks on our earth, it will be to give us light, and set us free from our prison house of darkness.

It is just, therefore, that we should rise and meet Thee on Thy approach, seeing that Thou hast come all this way to us. 'If the sick man cannot go out some distance to meet so great a Physician,' says St. Bernard, 'let him, at least, make an effort to raise his head and turn towards Him as He enters. It is not required of thee, Oh man, to pass the seas, or ascend the clouds, or cross the Alps. The way that is shown unto thee is not a long one; go as far as thine own self, and there meet thy God: for the word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart.

Meet Him at least at thy heart's compunction, and thy mouth's confession, that thou may at least go out of the filth of thy guilty conscience, for into that thou surely never wouldst make the author of purity enter,' Glory, then, be to Thee, Oh Jesus, for sparing the broken reed, that so it may regain its verdure and strength on the banks of the stream of which Thou art the source! Glory be to Thee, for having checked the breath of Thy almighty justice, and so cherishing the last spark left in the smoking flax, that it might burn up again, and give light at the Bridegroom's feast.

Hymn in Honour of the Blessed Virgin

(Composed by St. Peter Damian)

May all earth and heaven be glad and resound with the praises which, in this double choir, are sung to the maternity of the Virgin.

Yea, this Virgin, Mother of the Word, is made the gate of heaven; she gave God to the world, and, by this, opened heaven to us.

This happy Mother of Jesus conceived him without humiliation, and bore him without a moan; such a Mother could not be under the law put on Eve.

Oh that rich treasury of Mary's womb! it held the price which purchased our redemption, setting us free from the yoke of our debt.

The Son of the eternal Father dwelt within her; the Holy Ghost overshadowed her; what is such a Virgin's womb but a new made heaven?

To thee, Most High, who was born of the Virgin, be praise! Honour ineffable be to the Father, and to the Holy Ghost. Amen.

**Prayer from the Gallican Sacramentary
(In Adventu Domini, Oratio post Prophetiam)**

Benign Creator of the light, visiting an unworthy people, the oracles of the prophetic predictions, which were announced in the past ages, thou did fulfil by the mouth of John, thou did perfect by his works, thou did accomplish by his mission. Grant to thy people, making supplication to thee, to serve thee without fear; that, through the bowels of thy mercy, we, being filled with knowledge, may deserve to be directed by truth.