

**Addresses
for
Morning and Evening Prayer**

**according to the
1943 Lectionary
of the
USA 1928 Book of Common Prayer**

**Intended for use
by Layreaders
in the absence of a priest**

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Christmas 1

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Morning Prayer A

These are the same Lessons appointed for Christmas Day Morning Prayer. If they have been used on Christmas Day, they probably shouldn't be repeated. If they haven't been used and it is desired to use this set, see the Christmas booklet for lessons and homily.

First Lesson: Isaiah 9:2-7

Second Lesson: Luke 2:1-20

Morning Prayer B

First Lesson: Isaiah 49:8-13

*Here beginneth the eighth verse of
the forty-ninth chapter of the Prophet Isaiah.*

8 Thus saith the LORD, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages;

9 That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places.

10 They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them.

11 And I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted.

12 Behold, these shall come from far: and, lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim.

13 Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the LORD hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted.

Here endeth the First Lesson.

Second Lesson: Hebrews 2

Here beginneth the second chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews

1 Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.

2 For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward;

3 How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;

4 God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

5 For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.

6 But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that thou visitest him?

7 Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands:

8 Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him.

9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

O holy child of Bethlehem!
 Descend to us, we pray;
 Cast out our sin and enter in,
 Be born in us today.
 We hear the Christmas angels
 The great glad tidings tell;
 O come to us, abide with us,
 Our Lord Emmanuel!

Amen.

*" ... I thank thee, O Father,
 Lord of heaven and earth,
 because thou hast hid these things
 from the wise and prudent,
 and hast revealed them unto babes.
 ... no man knoweth the Son, but the Father;
 neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son,
 and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.*

And so it is that
 to every question we may ask
 He has already given the answer,
 one all-encompassing and complete answer
 to every need:

*"Come unto me, all ye that labour
 and are heavy laden,
 and I will give you rest.
 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me;
 for I am meek and lowly in heart:
 and ye shall find rest unto your souls.
 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*

How silently, how silently,
 The wondrous gift is given!
 So God imparts to human hearts
 The blessings of his heaven.
 No ear may hear his coming,
 But in this world of sin,
 Where meek hearts will receive him still
 The dear Christ enters in.

10 For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

11 For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,

12 Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.

13 And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me.

14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

16 For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.

17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

18 For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

Here endeth the Second Lesson.

Homily

*Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth;
and break forth into singing, O mountains:
for the LORD hath comforted his people,
and will have mercy upon his afflicted.*

What incredible richness in this morning's lessons!
What magnificent joy!
What unimaginable promise!

This is a troubled world in which we live.
We all know that, without being told.
We can hear the news.
We know about wars and rumors of wars.
We're all acutely aware of the spread of immorality.
Nothing really seems to be right,
or comforting,
or dependable.
Why, even the church has been failing us.
That's why we've ended up in a jurisdiction
that looks so small and isolated to those outside.
We are seeking certainty, and comfort, and hope.
But these are not things we have power to make.
If we are honest with ourselves,
we know that we, too, are troubled,
broken, dysfunctional.
As we said, "There is no health in us."
In ourselves,
we have no answers.

But a mere few days ago, it was Christmas.
What a warm, sentimental, and comforting day.
For most of us it is a time of family, of feasting,
of joy in the eyes of children.

There's no way to figure it out.
Life is a mystery.
Death is a mystery.
God is a mystery.
But we seek answers.
We need answers.
What are we to do?
Listen to Job. He says:

*God understandeth the way thereof,
and he knoweth the place thereof. ...
...And unto man he said,
Behold, the fear of the LORD,
that is wisdom;
and to depart from evil is understanding."*

We are confronted in this blessed season
with the presence of an infinite God
who has taken flesh
and has showed himself among us.
We cannot understand Him,
but we can know him.
We can touch Him.
Incredibly, we can even eat His Flesh and drink
His Blood
and take His own substance into ourselves.
We still lack answers,
no matter how much we want them,
but we have all the answer we need.
We have Him,
and with awe and thankfulness we can approach
Him.
As He said:

Whatever thoughts we may have about God,
 they aren't enough,
 they can't be enough;
 He is greater than we can possibly imagine,
 and yet,
 the Almighty God took our humanity upon Him,
 and entered into His own Creation,
 and we bow the knee
 before such an incomprehensible mystery:
*"And the Word was made flesh
 and dwelt among us!"*
 How can we pretend to understand that?
 But we believe.

Our Scripture Lessons this Evening are short,
 but profound.
 Job had been through a great deal.
 There had been much of tragedy,
 much of sadness,
 much of pain in his life,
 and he did not understand it at all.
 His friends gave him all kinds
 of apparently good advice,
 and made all kinds of plausible explanations,
 but finally he began to say what we heard read.

"Where shall wisdom be found?
 It can't be bought.
 Its price can't even be known.
 The depths don't have it, nor do the heights
 it is hid from the eyes of all living, "

For most of us it is a time of memory-building,
 a happy place in our minds where we can go
 when the present life seems too hard.
 For most of us, but not all.
 Sometimes the stresses of a sick family,
 or the aching loneliness of not having one,
 or the remembrance of bitter events,
 can drive away the simple human joys.
 Sometimes the feasting turns to ashes.
 Even at its best the merriment can only
 hide the sorrows and stresses of life.
 A party simply can't answer deep needs.

But a mere few days ago, it was Christmas,
 and Christmas is far more than the parties,
 far more than the families,
 far more than all the celebrations we enjoy.

In that manger we are so happy to remember,
 was laid the supreme evidence of God's love.
 The Creator became a part of His own creation.
 God himself became as truly human as you or I.
 As Hebrews records,
 he was made a little lower than the angels,
 not a mighty and fearsome being
 before whom we must fall down,
 but one of us,

*Forasmuch then
 as the children are partakers of flesh and blood,
 he also himself likewise took part of the same.*

He ate and drank, and even submitted himself
 to being changed like a baby,
 for he was one:
 King of kings, Lord of lords,
 and a weak and dependent little child,.

*[He] took part of the same;
that through death he might destroy him
that had the power of death, that is, the devil;
And deliver them who through fear of death
were all their lifetime subject to bondage.*

Born as a man, lived as a man,
suffered all the indignities that men do to men,
and died,
and in his voluntary sacrificial death,
conquered death,
delivered us who were captives,
and opened the gates to everlasting life.

Just a few days ago, it was Christmas,
and, not because of all the forced merriment
that we humans try to pour into a winter holiday;
but because His Incarnation,
His death, and His resurrection
have set us free --
because of this
we sing, we shout, we make merry,
and so shall we do forever.

Let us pray.

O Lord of all that was and is and ever shall be,
thou that tookest our flesh upon thee
and walkedst among us,
thou that diedst our death upon the Cross,
and rising didst break the bonds of death,
guide us daily unto true repentance,
and fill our hearts with the joy of thy salvation,
thou who livest with the Father and the Holy Ghost,
One God now and forever. Amen.

Homily

*" ... And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only-begotten Son of God;
Begotten of his Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light,
Very God of very God;
Begotten, not made;
Being of one substance with the Father;
By whom all things were made:
Who for us men and for our salvation
came down from heaven,
And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost
of the Virgin Mary,
And was made man: ... "*

We say these words
when we come together for Mass.
The Nicene Creed from which they are taken
is at the very center of our faith.
Do you understand the words you are saying?
Can you explain them well enough
to satisfy a doubter?
Not likely.
Those words are difficult words.
They carry ideas
that the human mind can't quite grasp,
because we are talking
about the incomprehensible reality
of a God who is too vast to be understood.
Some years ago
J. B. Phillips wrote a best-selling book.
It was titled, "Your God Is Too Small,"
and that is one thing that is always true.

26 When he made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder:

27 Then did he see it, and declare it; he prepared it, yea, and searched it out.

28 And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the LORD, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.

Here endeth the First Lesson.

Second Lesson: Matthew 11:25-30

Here beginneth the twenty-fifth verse of the eleventh chapter of the Gospel according to St. Matthew.

25 At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.

26 Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight.

27 All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.

28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Here endeth the Second Lesson.

Evening Prayer A

First Lesson: Isaiah 63:7-16

Here beginneth the seventh verse of the sixty-third chapter of the Prophet Isaiah.

7 I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the LORD, and the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses.

8 For he said, Surely they are my people, children that will not lie: so he was their Saviour.

9 In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.

10 But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them.

11 Then he remembered the days of old, Moses, and his people, saying, Where is he that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherd of his flock? where is he that put his holy Spirit within him?

12 That led them by the right hand of Moses with his glorious arm, dividing the water before them, to make himself an everlasting name?

13 That led them through the deep, as an horse in the wilderness, that they should not stumble?

14 As a beast goeth down into the valley, the Spirit of the LORD caused him to rest: so didst thou lead thy people, to make thyself a glorious name.

15 Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory: where is thy zeal and thy strength, the sounding of thy bowels and of thy mercies toward me? are they restrained?

16 Doubtless thou art our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O LORD, art our father, our redeemer; thy name is from everlasting.

Here endeth the First Lesson.

Second Lesson: 2 Peter 1:1-11

Here beginneth the Second Epistle of St. Peter.

1 Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:

2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

5 And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;

Evening Prayer B

First Lesson: Job 28:12-28

Here beginneth the twelfth verse of the twenty-eighth chapter of the Book of Job.

12 But where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding?

13 Man knoweth not the price thereof; neither is it found in the land of the living.

14 The depth saith, It is not in me: and the sea saith, It is not with me.

15 It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof.

16 It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire.

17 The gold and the crystal cannot equal it: and the exchange of it shall not be for jewels of fine gold.

18 No mention shall be made of coral, or of pearls: for the price of wisdom is above rubies.

19 The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it, neither shall it be valued with pure gold.

20 Whence then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding?

21 Seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of the air.

22 Destruction and death say, We have heard the fame thereof with our ears.

23 God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof.

24 For he looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven;

25 To make the weight for the winds; and he weigheth the waters by measure.

We were made in the image and likeness of God.
 In our sin we forfeited that image.
 By His incarnation,
 His death,
 and His resurrection,
 that image is restored to us, and more.
 The eternal Son of God took on our nature,
 and, so doing, has shared His nature with us,
 and this thought is so great
 we can go no further with it,
 but only stand in awe.

Let us pray.

O God, who didst lay the foundation of man's being in wonder and honour, and in greater wonder and honour didst renew the same: Grant that as we celebrate the wondrous incarnation of thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord, he who was partaker of our humanity may make us joint-heirs of his very Godhead; Who liveth and reigneth with thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.
 8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 9 But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.
 10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:
 11 For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Here endeth the Second Lesson.

Homily

"...I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the LORD, and the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD hath bestowed on us, ..."

So said the Prophet Isaiah,
 and isn't that just what we are doing this time of year?
 In the words of the old spiritual:
*"Go tell it on the mountain,
 over the hills and everywhere.
 Go tell it on the mountain,
 that Jesus Christ is born."*
 We have a message,
 a powerful message,
 a joyful message.

Why, even those who don't believe
are proclaiming it.
Money mad merchants
are joining in with Holy Church
Their loudspeakers have been sounding forth
about the angels' song,
about the manger scene,
about the holy child.
Lights gleam in a spirit of celebration.
Jesus Christ is born!

But Isaiah goes on,
with a message the world doesn't really want:
*"In all their affliction he was afflicted,
and the angel of his presence saved them:
in his love and in his pity he redeemed them;
and he bare them,
and carried them all the days of old. "*

The world doesn't really want to be rescued.
"We're just fine as we are," it says,
"All we want is more of the same ..."
Remember the advice
right after the tragic events of nine-eleven?
The president and many economists told us
that what we needed to do was simple:
"Just go shopping."
Maybe it makes sense
to strengthen the economy in that way,
but even if it does,
such advice completely ignores the root of the tragedy.
These events resulted not from a weak economy,
but from sin in the hearts of men,
from rebellion against the sovereign will of God.

As Isaiah continued:
*"But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit:
therefore he was turned to be their enemy,
and he fought against them. "*

But the same God who justly looks with wrath
on the sin that fills the world,
looks upon us, fallen as we are, and

*"...God so loved the world
that he gave his only begotten son,
that whosoever believeth in him
should not perish,
but have everlasting life."*

He took our nature upon Him,
lived and died as one of us, and

"In all their affliction he was afflicted, ..."

He came, He died, He rose again,
and so we celebrate, with great joy

And these are St. Peter's words:
*"...his divine power hath given unto us
all things that pertain unto life and godliness,
through the knowledge of him
that hath called us to glory and virtue:
Whereby are given unto us
exceeding great and precious promises:
that by these
ye might be partakers of the divine nature,
having escaped the corruption
that is in the world through lust. "*

"Partakers of the divine nature"
Think of the power of those words.