

Daily Office Readings, Year 2

Week of the Third Sunday of Advent

MONDAY, DECEMBER 15th

Psalm 44

1 We have heard with our ears, O God, our
forefathers have told us, *
the deeds you did in their days, in the days of old.

2 How with your hand you drove the peoples out
and planted our forefathers in the land; *
how you destroyed nations and made your people
flourish.

3 For they did not take the land by their sword,
nor did their arm win the victory for them; *
but your right hand, your arm, and the light of your
countenance,
because you favored them.

4 You are my King and my God; *
you command victories for Jacob.

5 Through you we pushed back our adversaries; *
through your Name we trampled on those who rose
up against us.

6 For I do not rely on my bow, *
and my sword does not give me the victory.

7 Surely, you gave us victory over our adversaries *
and put those who hate us to shame.

8 Every day we gloried in God, *
and we will praise your Name for ever.

9 Nevertheless, you have rejected and humbled us *
and do not go forth with our armies.

10 You have made us fall back before our
adversary, *
and our enemies have plundered us.

11 You have made us like sheep to be eaten *
and have scattered us among the nations.

12 You are selling your people for a trifle *
and are making no profit on the sale of them.

13 You have made us the scorn of our neighbors, *
a mockery and derision to those around us.

14 You have made us a byword among the nations, *
a laughing-stock among the peoples.

15 My humiliation is daily before me, *
and shame has covered my face;

16 Because of the taunts of the mockers and
blasphemers, *
because of the enemy and avenger.

17 All this has come upon us; *
yet we have not forgotten you,
nor have we betrayed your covenant.

18 Our heart never turned back, *
nor did our footsteps stray from your path;

19 Though you thrust us down into a place of
misery, *
and covered us over with deep darkness.

20 If we have forgotten the Name of our God, *
or stretched out our hands to some strange god,

21 Will not God find it out? *
for he knows the secrets of the heart.

22 Indeed, for your sake we are killed all the day
long; *
we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

23 Awake, O Lord! why are you sleeping? *
Arise! do not reject us for ever.

24 Why have you hidden your face *
and forgotten our affliction and oppression?

25 We sink down into the dust; *
our body cleaves to the ground.

26 Rise up, and help us, *
and save us, for the sake of your steadfast love.

Zechariah 1:7-17

On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, the month of Shebat, in the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came to the prophet Zechariah son of Berechiah son of Iddo; and Zechariah said, In the night I saw a man riding on a red horse! He was standing among the myrtle trees in the glen; and behind him were red, sorrel, and white horses. Then I said, ‘What are these, my lord?’ The angel who talked with me said to me, ‘I will show you what they are.’ So the man who was standing among the myrtle trees answered, ‘They are those whom the Lord has sent to patrol the earth.’ Then they spoke to the angel of the Lord who was standing among the myrtle trees, ‘We have patrolled the earth, and lo, the whole earth remains at peace.’ Then the angel of the Lord said, ‘O Lord of hosts, how long will you withhold mercy from Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, with which you have been angry these seventy years?’ Then the Lord replied with gracious and comforting words to the angel who talked with me. So the angel who talked with me said to me, Proclaim this message: Thus says the Lord of hosts; I am very jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion. And I am extremely angry with the nations that are at ease; for while I was only a little angry, they made the disaster worse. Therefore, thus says the Lord, I have returned to Jerusalem with compassion; my house shall be built in it, says the Lord of hosts, and the measuring line shall be stretched out over Jerusalem. Proclaim further: Thus says the Lord of hosts: My cities shall again overflow with prosperity; the Lord will again comfort Zion and again choose Jerusalem.

Revelation 3:7-13

‘And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write:

These are the words of the holy one, the true one,
who has the key of David,
who opens and no one will shut,
who shuts and no one opens:

‘I know your works. Look, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but are lying—I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you. Because you have kept my word of patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth. I am coming soon; hold fast to what you have, so that no one may seize your crown. If you conquer, I will make you a pillar in the temple of my God; you will never go out of it. I will write on you the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem that comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name. Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches.

Matthew 24:15-31

‘So when you see the desolating sacrilege standing in the holy place, as was spoken of by the prophet Daniel (let the reader understand), then those in Judea must flee to the mountains; someone on the housetop must not go down to take what is in the house; someone in the field must not turn back to get a coat. Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing infants in those days! Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a sabbath. For at that time there will be great suffering, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. And if those days had not been cut short, no one would be saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short. Then if anyone says to you, “Look! Here is the Messiah!” or “There he is!”—do not believe it. For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and produce great signs and omens, to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. Take note, I have told you beforehand. So, if they say to you, “Look! He is in the wilderness”, do not go out. If they say, “Look! He is in the inner rooms”, do not believe it. For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.

‘Immediately after the suffering of those days
the sun will be darkened,
and the moon will not give its light;
the stars will fall from heaven,
and the powers of heaven will be shaken.
Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in
heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will
mourn, and they will see “the Son of Man coming
on the clouds of heaven” with power and great
glory. And he will send out his angels with a loud
trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the
four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16th

Psalm 47

1 Clap your hands, all you peoples; *
shout to God with a cry of joy.

2 For the Lord Most High is to be feared; *
he is the great King over all the earth.

3 He subdues the peoples under us, *
and the nations under our feet.

4 He chooses our inheritance for us, *
the pride of Jacob whom he loves.

5 God has gone up with a shout, *
the Lord with the sound of the ram's-horn.

6 Sing praises to God, sing praises; *
sing praises to our King, sing praises.

7 For God is King of all the earth; *
sing praises with all your skill.

8 God reigns over the nations; *
God sits upon his holy throne.

9 The nobles of the peoples have gathered together*
with the people of the God of Abraham.

10 The rulers of the earth belong to God, *
and he is highly exalted.

Psalm 48

1 Great is the Lord, and highly to be praised; *
in the city of our God is his holy hill.

2 Beautiful and lofty, the joy of all the earth, is the
hill of Zion, *
the very center of the world and the city of the great
King.

3 God is in her citadels; *
he is known to be her sure refuge.

4 Behold, the kings of the earth assembled *
and marched forward together.

5 They looked and were astounded; *
they retreated and fled in terror.

6 Trembling seized them there; *
they writhed like a woman in childbirth,
like ships of the sea when the east wind shatters
them.

7 As we have heard, so have we seen,
in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our
God; *
God has established her for ever.

8 We have waited in silence on your loving-
kindness, O God, *
in the midst of your temple.

9 Your praise, like your Name, O God, reaches to
the world's end; *
your right hand is full of justice.

10 Let Mount Zion be glad
and the cities of Judah rejoice, *
because of your judgments.

11 Make the circuit of Zion;
walk round about her; *
count the number of her towers.

12 Consider well her bulwarks;
examine her strongholds; *
that you may tell those who come after.

13 This God is our God for ever and ever; *
he shall be our guide for evermore.

Zechariah 2:1-13

I looked up and saw a man with a measuring line in his hand. Then I asked, 'Where are you going?' He answered me, 'To measure Jerusalem, to see what is its width and what is its length.' Then the angel who talked with me came forward, and another angel came forward to meet him, and said to him, 'Run, say to that young man: Jerusalem shall be inhabited like villages without walls, because of the multitude of people and animals in it. For I will be a wall of fire all round it, says the Lord, and I will be the glory within it.'

Up, up! Flee from the land of the north, says the Lord; for I have spread you abroad like the four winds of heaven, says the Lord. Up! Escape to Zion, you that live with daughter Babylon. For thus said the Lord of hosts (after his glory sent me) regarding the nations that plundered you: Truly, one who touches you touches the apple of my eye. See now, I am going to raise my hand against them, and they shall become plunder for their own slaves. Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent me. Sing and rejoice, O daughter Zion! For lo, I will come and dwell in your midst, says the Lord. Many nations shall join themselves to the Lord on that day, and shall be my people; and I will dwell in your midst. And you shall know that the Lord of hosts has sent me to you. The Lord will inherit Judah as his portion in the holy land, and will again choose Jerusalem.

Be silent, all people, before the Lord; for he has roused himself from his holy dwelling.

Revelation 3:14-22

'And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the origin of God's creation:

'I know your works; you are neither cold nor hot. I wish that you were either cold or hot. So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I am about to spit you out of my mouth. For you say, "I

am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing." You do not realize that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. Therefore I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire so that you may be rich; and white robes to clothe you and to keep the shame of your nakedness from being seen; and salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see. I reprove and discipline those whom I love. Be earnest, therefore, and repent. Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me. To the one who conquers I will give a place with me on my throne, just as I myself conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches.'

Matthew 24:32-44

'From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

'But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so too will be the coming of the Son of Man. Then two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken and one will be left. Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.

Psalm 49

1 Hear this, all you peoples;
hearken, all you who dwell in the world, *
you of high degree and low, rich and poor together.

2 My mouth shall speak of wisdom, *
and my heart shall meditate on understanding.

3 I will incline my ear to a proverb *
and set forth my riddle upon the harp.

4 Why should I be afraid in evil days, *
when the wickedness of those at my heels surrounds
me,

5 The wickedness of those who put their trust in
their goods, *
and boast of their great riches?

6 We can never ransom ourselves, *
or deliver to God the price of our life;

7 For the ransom of our life is so great, *
that we should never have enough to pay it,

8 In order to live for ever and ever, *
and never see the grave.

9 For we see that the wise die also;
like the dull and stupid they perish *
and leave their wealth to those who come after
them.

10 Their graves shall be their homes for ever,
their dwelling places from generation to
generation,*
though they call the lands after their own names.

11 Even though honored, they cannot live for ever;*
they are like the beasts that perish.

12 Such is the way of those who foolishly trust in
themselves, *
and the end of those who delight in their own
words.

13 Like a flock of sheep they are destined to die;
Death is their shepherd; *
they go down straightway to the grave.

14 Their form shall waste away, *
and the land of the dead shall be their home.

15 But God will ransom my life; *
he will snatch me from the grasp of death.

16 Do not be envious when some become rich, *
or when the grandeur of their house increases;

17 For they will carry nothing away at their death, *
nor will their grandeur follow them.

18 Though they thought highly of themselves while
they lived, *
and were praised for their success,

19 They shall join the company of their forebears, *
who will never see the light again.

20 Those who are honored, but have no
understanding, *
are like the beasts that perish.

Psalm 53

1 The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God."*
All are corrupt and commit abominable acts;
there is none who does any good.

2 God looks down from heaven upon us all, *
to see if there is any who is wise,
if there is one who seeks after God.

3 Every one has proved faithless;
all alike have turned bad; *
there is none who does good; no, not one.

4 Have they no knowledge, those evildoers *
who eat up my people like bread and do not call
upon God?

5 See how greatly they tremble,
such trembling as never was; *
for God has scattered the bones of the enemy;
they are put to shame, because God has rejected
them.

6 Oh, that Israel's deliverance would come out of Zion! *
when God restores the fortunes of his people
Jacob will rejoice and Israel be glad.)

Zechariah 3:1-10

Then he showed me the high priest Joshua standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. And the Lord said to Satan, 'The Lord rebuke you, O Satan! The Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is not this man a brand plucked from the fire?' Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel. The angel said to those who were standing before him, 'Take off his filthy clothes.' And to him he said, 'See, I have taken your guilt away from you, and I will clothe you in festal apparel.' And I said, 'Let them put a clean turban on his head.' So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him in the apparel; and the angel of the Lord was standing by.

Then the angel of the Lord assured Joshua, saying 'Thus says the Lord of hosts: If you will walk in my ways and keep my requirements, then you shall rule my house and have charge of my courts, and I will give you the right of access among those who are standing here. Now listen, Joshua, high priest, you and your colleagues who sit before you! For they are an omen of things to come: I am going to bring my servant the Branch. For on the stone that I have set before Joshua, on a single stone with seven facets, I will engrave its inscription, says the Lord of hosts, and I will remove the guilt of this land in a single day. On that day, says the Lord of hosts, you shall invite each other to come under your vine and fig tree.'

Revelation 4:1-8

After this I looked, and there in heaven a door stood open! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, 'Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.' At once I was in the spirit, and there in heaven stood a throne, with one seated on the throne! And the one seated there looks like jasper and cornelian,

and around the throne is a rainbow that looks like an emerald. Around the throne are twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones are twenty-four elders, dressed in white robes, with golden crowns on their heads. Coming from the throne are flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and in front of the throne burn seven flaming torches, which are the seven spirits of God; and in front of the throne there is something like a sea of glass, like crystal.

Around the throne, and on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind: the first living creature like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third living creature with a face like a human face, and the fourth living creature like a flying eagle. And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and inside. Day and night without ceasing they sing,
'Holy, holy, holy,
the Lord God the Almighty,
who was and is and is to come.'

Matthew 24:45-51

'Who then is the faithful and wise slave, whom his master has put in charge of his household, to give the other slaves their allowance of food at the proper time? Blessed is that slave whom his master will find at work when he arrives. Truly I tell you, he will put that one in charge of all his possessions. But if that wicked slave says to himself, "My master is delayed", and he begins to beat his fellow-slaves, and eats and drinks with drunkards, the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour that he does not know. He will cut him in pieces and put him with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Psalm 33

1 Rejoice in the Lord, you righteous; *
it is good for the just to sing praises.

2 Praise the Lord with the harp; *
play to him upon the psaltery and lyre.

3 Sing for him a new song; *
sound a fanfare with all your skill upon the trumpet.

4 For the word of the Lord is right, *
and all his works are sure.

5 He loves righteousness and justice; *
the loving-kindness of the Lord fills the whole earth.

6 By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, *
by the breath of his mouth all the heavenly hosts.

7 He gathers up the waters of the ocean as in a water-skin *
and stores up the depths of the sea.

8 Let all the earth fear the Lord; *
let all who dwell in the world stand in awe of him.

9 For he spoke, and it came to pass; *
he commanded, and it stood fast.

10 The Lord brings the will of the nations to naught; *
he thwarts the designs of the peoples.

11 But the Lord's will stands fast for ever, *
and the designs of his heart from age to age.

12 Happy is the nation whose God is the Lord! *
happy the people he has chosen to be his own!

13 The Lord looks down from heaven, *
and beholds all the people in the world.

14 From where he sits enthroned he turns his gaze *
on all who dwell on the earth.

15 He fashions all the hearts of them *
and understands all their works.

16 There is no king that can be saved by a mighty army; *
a strong man is not delivered by his great strength.

17 The horse is a vain hope for deliverance; *
for all its strength it cannot save.

18 Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon those who fear him, *
on those who wait upon his love,

19 To pluck their lives from death, *
and to feed them in time of famine.

20 Our soul waits for the Lord; *
he is our help and our shield.

21 Indeed, our heart rejoices in him, *
for in his holy Name we put our trust.

22 Let your loving-kindness, O Lord, be upon us, *
as we have put our trust in you.

Zechariah 4:1-14

The angel who talked with me came again, and wakened me, as one is wakened from sleep. He said to me, 'What do you see?' And I said, 'I see a lampstand all of gold, with a bowl on the top of it; there are seven lamps on it, with seven lips on each of the lamps that are on the top of it. And by it there are two olive trees, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left.' I said to the angel who talked with me, 'What are these, my lord?' Then the angel who talked with me answered me, 'Do you not know what these are?' I said, 'No, my lord.' He said to me, 'This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, says the Lord of hosts. What are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain; and he shall bring out the top stone amid shouts of "Grace, grace to it!"'

Moreover, the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 'The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also

complete it. Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent me to you. For whoever has despised the day of small things shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel.

‘These seven are the eyes of the Lord, which range through the whole earth.’ Then I said to him, ‘What are these two olive trees on the right and the left of the lampstand?’ And a second time I said to him, ‘What are these two branches of the olive trees, which pour out the oil through the two golden pipes?’ He said to me, ‘Do you not know what these are?’ I said, ‘No, my lord.’ Then he said, ‘These are the two anointed ones who stand by the Lord of the whole earth.’

Revelation 4:9-5:5

And whenever the living creatures give glory and honour and thanks to the one who is seated on the throne, who lives for ever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall before the one who is seated on the throne and worship the one who lives for ever and ever; they cast their crowns before the throne, singing,

‘You are worthy, our Lord and God,
to receive glory and honour and power,
for you created all things,
and by your will they existed and were created.’

Then I saw in the right hand of the one seated on the throne a scroll written on the inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals; and I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, ‘Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?’ And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it. And I began to weep bitterly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. Then one of the elders said to me, ‘Do not weep. See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.’

Matthew 25:1-13

‘Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. But at midnight there was a shout, “Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.” Then all those bridesmaids got up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish said to the wise, “Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.” But the wise replied, “No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.” And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut. Later the other bridesmaids came also, saying, “Lord, lord, open to us.” But he replied, “Truly I tell you, I do not know you.” Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.