Liturgy of the Hours

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Office of Readings

December 24, 2026

{ Thursday of the Fourth Week of Advent }

Liturgy of the Hours
EBREVIARY

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

Their own strength could not save them; it was your strength and the light of your face.

Psalm 44

The misfortunes of God's people

We triumph over all these things through him who loved us (Romans 8:37).

I

We héard with our ówn ears, O Gód, *
our fáthers have tóld us the stóry
of the thíngs you díd in their dáys, *
you yoursélf, in dáys long agó.

To plánt them you upróoted the nátions: *
to let them spréad you laid péoples lów.
No swórd of their ówn won the lánd; *
no árm of their ówn brought them víctory.
It was yóur right hánd, your árm *
and the líght of your fáce: for you lóved them.

It is yóu, my kíng, my Gód, *

who gránted víctories to Jácob.
Through yóu we béat down our fóes; *
in your náme we trámpled our aggréssors.

For it was nót in my bów that I trústed *
nor yét was I sáved by my swórd:
it was yóu who sáved us from our fóes, *
it was yóu who put our fóes to sháme.
All day lóng our bóast was in Gód, *
and we práised your náme without céasing.

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

Their own strength could not save them; it was your strength and the light of your face.

Antiphon 2

Turn back to the Lord; he will not hide his face.

II

Yet nów you have rejécted us, disgráced us: *
you no lónger go fórth with our ármies.
You máke us retréat from the fóe *
and our énemies plúnder us at wíll.

You máke us like shéep for the sláughter *
and scátter us amóng the nátions.
You séll your own péople for nóthing *
and máke no prófit by the sále.

You máke us the táunt of our néighbors, *
the laúghing stock of áll who are néar.
Among the nátions, you máke us a býword, *
among the péoples a thíng of derísion.

All day lóng my disgráce is befóre me: *
my fáce is cóvered with sháme

at the vóice of the táunter, the scóffer, *
at the síght of the fóe and the avénger.

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

Turn back to the Lord; he will not hide his face.

Antiphon 3

Arise, Lord, do not abandon us for ever.

III

This befell us though we had not forgótten you; *
though we had not been fálse to your cóvenant,
though we had not withdráwn our héarts; *
though our féet had not stráyed from your páth.
Yet you have crúshed us in a pláce of sórrows *
and cóvered us with the shádow of déath.

Had we forgótten the náme of our Gód *
or strétched our hánds to another gód
would not Gód have fóund this óut, *
he who knóws the sécrets of the héart?
It is for yóu that we face déath all day lóng *
and are cóunted as shéep for the sláughter.

Awáke, O Lord, whý do you sléep? *
Aríse, do not rejéct us for éver!
Whý do you híde your fáce from us *
and forgét our oppréssion and mísery?

For we are bróught down lów to the dúst; *
our bódy lies próstrate on the éarth.
Stand úp and cóme to our hélp! *
Redéem us becáuse of your lóve!

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

Arise, Lord, do not abandon us for ever.

Verse

The Lord proclaims his word to Jacob.

— His law and decrees to Israel.

Sit

Readings

First reading

From the book of the prophet Isaiah

51:17—52:2, 7-10

The good news is brought to Jerusalem

Awake, awake!
  Arise, O Jerusalem,
You who drank at the Lord's hand
  the cup of his wrath;
Who drained to the dregs
  the bowl of staggering!
She has no one to guide her
  of all the sons she bore;
She has no one to grasp her by the hand,
  of all the sons she reared!—

Your misfortunes are double;
  who is there to condole with you?
Desolation and destruction, famine and sword!
  Who is there to comfort you?
Your sons lie helpless
  at every street corner
  like antelopes in a net.
They are filled with the wrath of the Lord,
  the rebuke of your God.

But now, hear this, O afflicted one,
drunk, but not with wine,
Thus says the Lord, your Master,
your God, who defends his people:

See, I am taking from your hand
the cup of staggering;
The bowl of my wrath
you shall no longer drink.
I will put it into the hands of your tormentors,
those who ordered you to bow down,
that they might walk over you,
While you offered your back like the ground,
like the street for them to walk on.

Awake, awake!
Put on your strength, O Zion;
Put on your glorious garments,
O Jerusalem, holy city.
No longer shall the uncircumcised
or the unclean enter you.

Shake off the dust,
ascend to the throne, Jerusalem;
Loose the bonds from your neck,
O captive daughter Zion!

How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of him who brings glad tidings,
Announcing peace, bearing good news,
announcing salvation, and saying to Zion,
"Your God is King!"
Hark! Your watchmen raise a cry,
together they shout for joy,
For they see directly, before their eyes,
the Lord restoring Zion.

Break out together in song,
O ruins of Jerusalem!
For the Lord comforts his people,

he redeems Jerusalem.
The Lord has bared his holy arm
in the sight of all the nations;
All the ends of the earth will behold
the salvation of our God.

Responsory

See Exodus 19:10, 11; Deuteronomy 7:15; see Daniel 9:24

Cleanse yourselves, sons of Israel, says the Lord; for tomorrow your Lord will come down,

— and he will take away from you all weaknesses.

Tomorrow the wickedness of the earth will be destroyed, and the Savior of the world will rule over us.

— And he will take away from you all weaknesses.

Second reading

From a sermon by Saint Augustine, bishop

(Sermo 185: PL 38, 997-999)

Truth has arisen from the earth, and justice looked down from heaven

Awake, mankind! For your sake God has become man. *Awake, you who sleep, rise up from the dead, and Christ will enlighten you.* I tell you again: for your sake, God became man.

You would have suffered eternal death, had he not been born in time. Never would you have been freed from sinful flesh, had he not taken on himself the likeness of sinful flesh. You would have suffered everlasting unhappiness, had it not been for this mercy. You would never have returned to life, had he not shared your death. You would have been lost if he had not hastened to your aid. You would have perished, had he not come.

Let us then joyfully celebrate the coming of our salvation and redemption. Let us celebrate the festive day on which he who is the great and eternal day came from the great and endless day of eternity into our own short day of time.

He has become our justice, our sanctification, our redemption, so that, as

it is written: Let him who glories glory in the Lord.

Truth, then, has arisen from the earth: Christ who said, *I am the Truth, was born of the Virgin. And justice looked down from heaven:* because believing in this new-born child, man is justified not by himself but by God.

Truth has arisen from the earth: because *the Word was made flesh. And justice looked down from heaven:* because *every good gift and every perfect gift is from above.*

Truth has arisen from the earth: flesh from Mary. *And justice looked down from heaven:* for *man can receive nothing unless it has been given him from heaven.*

Justified by faith, let us be at peace with God: for justice and peace have embraced one another. Through our Lord Jesus Christ: for *Truth has arisen from the earth. Through whom we have access to that grace in which we stand, and our boast is in our hope of God's glory.* He does not say: "of our glory," but *of God's glory:* for *justice* has not come out of us but has *looked down from heaven.* Therefore *he who glories, let him glory,* not in himself, but *in the Lord.*

For this reason, when our Lord was born of the Virgin, the message of the angelic voices was: *Glory to God in the highest, and peace to men of good will.*

For how could there be peace on earth unless *Truth has arisen from the earth,* that is, unless Christ were born of our flesh? And *he is our peace who made the two into one:* that we might be men of good will, sweetly linked by the bond of unity.

Let us then rejoice in this grace, so that our glorying may bear witness to our good conscience by which we glory, not in ourselves, but in the Lord. That is why Scripture says: *He is my glory, the one who lifts up my head.* For what greater grace could God have made to dawn on us than to make his only Son become the son of man, so that a son of man might in his turn become son of God?

Ask if this were merited; ask for its reason, for its justification, and see whether you will find any other answer but sheer grace.

Responsory

Isaiah 11:1, 5, 2

A shoot shall grow from the root of Jesse, and there a flower shall blossom.

— Justice will be the girdle around his loins, and faithfulness the belt around his waist.

The Spirit of the Lord will rest upon him: a spirit of wisdom and understanding, a spirit of counsel and fortitude.

— Justice will be the girdle around his loins, and faithfulness the belt around his waist.

Stand

Concluding Prayer

Let us pray.

Come, Lord Jesus,
do not delay;
give new courage to your people who trust in your love.
By your coming, raise us to the joy of your kingdom,
where you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

— Amen.

Acclamation

Let us praise the Lord.

— And give him thanks.

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