



*A ministry and community of prayer of
The Episcopal Diocese of Vermont*

A few notes about today's service.

Please ***leave your microphone on mute*** during the responsory portions of the service. You are welcome to unmute yourself when you are invited to offer your prayers, then remember to mute it again when you have completed your prayer.

MORNING PRAYER

Friday, November 24, 2023

Ordinary Time, Proper 28

**Catherine of Alexandria, Barbara of Nicomedia. &
Margaret of Antioch MARTYRS**

Opening Sentence

The Officiant says the following

If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation. *2 Corinthians 5:17-18*

Invitatory and Psalter

Officiant O God, open our lips.

People And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

All Praise to the holy and undivided Trinity, one God:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.
Alleluia.

Officiant O God you are my God,

People From break of day I seek you.

read in unison **Psalm 63:1-8** *Deus, Deus meus*

O God, you are my God; eagerly I seek you; *
my soul thirsts for you, my flesh faints for you,
as in a barren and dry land where there is no water.

Therefore I have gazed upon you in your holy place, *
that I might behold your power and your glory.

For your loving-kindness is better than life itself; *
my lips shall give you praise.

So will I bless you as long as I live *
and lift up my hands in your Name.

My soul is content, as with marrow and fatness, *
and my mouth praises you with joyful lips,

When I remember you upon my bed, *
and meditate on you in the night watches.

For you have been my helper, *
and under the shadow of your wings I will rejoice.

My soul clings to you; *
your right hand holds me fast.

Officiant O God you are my God,

People From break of day I seek you.

The Psalm Appointed – Psalm 107 Part I

In unison or responsively by whole verse

1 We give you thanks, O God, for you are good; *
your mercy endures for ever.

2 Let all those whom you have redeemed proclaim *
that you redeemed them from the hand of the foe.

3 You gathered them out of the lands; *
from the east and from the west,
from the north and from the south.

4 Some wandered in desert wastes; *
they found no way to a city where they might dwell.

5 They were hungry and thirsty; *
their spirits languished within them.

6 Then they cried to you in their trouble, *
and you delivered them from their distress.

7 You put their feet on a straight path *
to go to a city where they might dwell.

8 Let them give thanks to you for your mercy *
and the wonders you do for your children.

9 For you satisfy the thirsty *
and fill the hungry with good things.

10 Some sat in darkness and deep gloom, *
bound fast in misery and iron;

11 Because they rebelled against your words, O God, *
and despised your counsel, O Most High.

12 So you humbled their spirits with hard labor; *
they stumbled, and there was none to help.

13 Then they cried to you in their trouble, *

and you delivered them from their distress.

14 You led them out of darkness and deep gloom *
and broke their bonds asunder.

15 Let them give thanks to you for your mercy *
and the wonders you do for your children.

16 For you shatter the doors of bronze *
and break in two the iron bars.

17 Some were fools and took to rebellious ways; *
they were afflicted because of their sins.

18 They abhorred all manner of food *
and drew near to death's door.

19 Then they cried to you in their trouble, *
and you delivered them from their distress.

20 You sent forth your word and healed them *
and saved them from the grave.

21 Let them give thanks to you for your mercy *
and the wonders you do for your children.

22 Let them offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving *
and tell of your acts with shouts of joy.

23 Some went down to the sea in ships *
and plied their trade in deep waters;

24 They beheld your works, O God, *
and your wonders in the deep.

25 Then you spoke, and a stormy wind arose, *

which tossed high the waves of the sea.

26 They mounted up to the heavens and fell back to the depths; *
their hearts melted because of their peril.

27 They reeled and staggered like drunkards *
and were at their wits' end.

28 Then they cried to you in their trouble, *
and you delivered them from their distress.

29 You stilled the storm to a whisper *
and quieted the waves of the sea.

30 Then were they glad because of the calm, *
and you brought them to the harbor they were bound for.

31 Let them give thanks to you for your mercy *
and the wonders you do for your children.

32 Let them exalt you in the congregation of the people *
and praise you in the council of the elders.

Praise to the holy and undivided Trinity, one God:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

First Reading

Reader A reading from The Revelation to John 22:6-13

And he said to me, 'These words are trustworthy and true, for the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place.'

'See, I am coming soon! Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.'

I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me; but he said to me, 'You must not do that! I am a fellow-servant with you and your comrades the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God!'

And he said to me, 'Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy.'
'See, I am coming soon; my reward is with me, to repay according to everyone's work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.'

Reader Here ends the reading.
A moment of silence is kept after the reading.

read in unison **Canticle B A Song of Pilgrimage**

Ecclesiasticus 51:13-16,20b-22

Before I ventured forth,
even while I was very young, *
 I sought wisdom openly in my prayer.
In the forecourts of the temple I asked for her, *
 and I will seek her to the end.
From first blossom to early fruit, *
 she has been the delight of my heart.
My foot has kept firmly to the true path, *
 diligently from my youth have I pursued her.
I inclined my ear a little and received her; *
 I found for myself much wisdom
 and became adept in her.
To the one who gives me wisdom will I give glory, *
 for I have resolved to live according to her way.
From the beginning I gained courage from her, *
 therefore I will not be forsaken.
In my inmost being I have been stirred to seek her, *
 therefore have I gained a good possession.

As my reward the Almighty has given me the gift of language,*
and with it will I offer praise to God.

The Gospel

Reader A reading from the Gospel of Matthew 18:10-20

‘Take care that you do not despise one of these little ones; for, I tell you, in heaven their angels continually see the face of my Father in heaven. What do you think? If a shepherd has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray? And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. So it is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should be lost.

‘If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax-collector. Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.’

Reader Here ends the reading.

A moment of silence is observed as we reflect on the teachings and ministry of Jesus.

The Apostles' Creed

Together

I believe in God, the Father almighty,

creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

The Prayers

Officiant God be with you.

People And also with you.

Officiant Let us pray.

Officiant and People

Our loving God in heaven,

holy is your Name,

may your reign come,

your will be done,

on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial,

and deliver us from evil.

For all creation, the power, and the glory are yours,

now and for ever. *Amen.*

Suffrages C

V. Help us, O God our Savior;

R. Deliver us and forgive us our sins.

V. Look upon your congregation;

R. Give to your people the blessing of peace.

V. Declare your glory among the nations;

R. And your wonders among all peoples.

V. Do not let the oppressed be shamed and turned away;

R. Never forget the lives of your poor.

V. Continue your loving-kindness to those who know you;

R. And your favor to those who are true of heart.

V. Satisfy us by your loving-kindness in the morning;

R. So shall we rejoice and be glad all the days of our life.

The Collects

Officiant

Embolden your church, O God, with the stories of your saints Catherine, Barbara, and Margaret, that we might face all trials and adversities with a fearless mind and an unbroken spirit, knowing that we are more than conquerors through Jesus Christ who strengthens us. Through the same Jesus Christ our Redeemer. *Amen.*

Together

Almighty God, source of all wisdom and understanding: Look graciously on your church, and so guide the hearts and minds of those who will choose our next presiding bishop, that we may receive a faithful pastor who will care for all of your people, equip us for our ministries, and proclaim your word to us and to the world, through Jesus Christ our Savior. *Amen.*

Together (Respondent prays)

God, you embrace in love those who cry out to you. Lift up all whom hatred has cast down; embolden those who need courage to speak and act

against oppression; sustain those who are weary from efforts that bring no end to injustice. Comfort parents weeping for children, children who have been separated from parents, and families in crises of any kind. Restore hope where it has been lost, so that all may trust your love that reaches to the depths of pain and suffering. In Jesus's Name we pray. Amen.

The Officiant says

I invite your prayers of thanksgiving and intercession at this time.

(During the silence please add your own prayers. Please unmute if you wish to be heard and remute when your prayer is complete.)

The Officiant concludes with the Collect for Mission

A Collect for Mission and Self-dedication

Lord Jesus Christ, you stretched out your arms of love on the hard wood of the cross that everyone might come within the reach of your saving embrace: So clothe us in your Spirit that we, reaching forth our hands in love, may bring those who do not know you to the knowledge and love of you; for the honor of your name. *Amen.*

The General Thanksgiving

Together

Almighty God, of boundless mercy,
we your unworthy servants give you humble thanks
for all your goodness and loving-kindness
to us and to all whom you have made.
We bless you for our creation, preservation,
and all the blessings of this life;
but above all for your immeasurable love
in the redemption of the world
by our Savior Jesus Christ;
for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.
And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies,
that with truly thankful hearts
we may show forth your praise,
not only with our lips,

but in our lives,
by giving up our selves to your service,
and by walking before you
in holiness and righteousness all our days;
through Jesus Christ our best vision,
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,
be honor and glory throughout all ages. Amen.

Dismissal

Deacon Let us bless God.

People Thanks be to God.

Concluding Sentences

May God light in us a holy fire: Light a fire that is worthy of our ancestors. Light a fire that is worthy of our children. Light a fire that is worthy of God. Now let us go in peace, lighting a holy fire wherever we go. *Amen.*

May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing through the power of the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

Glory to God, whose power working in us can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine. Glory to God from generation to generation in the church, and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Commemoration: Catherine of Alexandria, Barbara of Nicomedia. & Margaret of Antioch MARTYRS, c. 300

On this day are remembered three women martyrs who were some of the most popular saints in ancient and medieval times, but who are today regarded as of doubtful historicity. Nevertheless, their stories have inspired Christians over the centuries.

Catherine of Alexandria's story has caught the popular imagination of many generations (she is, for example, one of the personages from whom Joan of Arc claimed to receive regular visits and messages), although most scholars judge it to be simply a work of fiction with no historical basis. No references to her can be traced earlier than the ninth (or possibly the eighth) century.

It is said that Catherine was a Christian maiden of Alexandria in Egypt, possessed of beauty, brains, and noble birth. She rebuked the heathen emperor Maxentius for his idolatry, and he responded by offering to marry her if she would renounce her faith. She refused. Fifty philosophers were set to refute her in a public debate. She easily won every point, and made them look foolish. The emperor, a sore loser, had them burned alive. The emperor went out of town on business, and when he returned, he discovered that Catherine had converted his queen and the 200 soldiers of the empress's bodyguard. This was too much. He had the Empress and her soldiers put to death. Catherine was sentenced to be tortured on a spiked wheel, but the wheel flew apart and the fragments killed many of her accusers. After this and other marvels, Catherine was beheaded, and from her veins flowed not blood but milk. The angels carried her to Mount Sinai, where St. Catherine's Monastery is now located. She is depicted carrying a spiked wheel, representing the manner in which it was proposed to put her to death. The "catherine-wheel," a form of fireworks that spins as it burns, is named for her.

Catherine is patron of preachers, philosophers, librarians (probably association with the Library of Alexandria), young girls, and craftsmen working with a wheel (potters, spinners, etc). The Mt. Sinai monastery was built by Justinian in 527, and has borne the name of Catherine since the eighth or ninth century. The monastery survives unmolested by Muslims (by express command of Mohammed) and has a vast but uncatalogued treasure of ancient manuscripts. One of the earliest known manuscripts of the complete New Testament, the Codex Sinaiticus, was found there, borrowed by the finder, and never returned to the monastery. (I believe that it is now in the British Museum.) Since then, they have been a bit crusty to visiting scholars. *by James Kiefer*

Barbara of Nicomedia, or Great Martyr Barbara, was an early Christian Greek saint and martyr. Accounts place her in the 3rd century in Heliopolis of Phoenicia, present-day Baalbek, Lebanon. There is no reference to her in the authentic early Christian writings nor in the original recension of Saint Jerome's martyrology. Her name can be traced to the 7th century, and veneration of her was common, especially in the East, from the 9th century.

Saint Barbara is often portrayed with miniature chains and a tower. As one of the Fourteen Holy Helpers, Barbara continues to be a popular saint in modern times,

perhaps best known as the patron saint of armorers, artillerymen, military engineers, miners and others who work with explosives because of her old legend's association with lightning.

According to the hagiographies, Barbara, the daughter of a rich pagan, was carefully guarded by her father who kept her locked up in a tower in order to preserve her from the outside world. Having secretly become a Christian, she rejected an offer of marriage that she received through her father.

Dragged before the prefect of the province, Martinianus, who had her cruelly tortured, Barbara held true to her Christian faith. During the night, the dark prison was bathed in light and new miracles occurred. Every morning, her wounds were healed. Torches that were to be used to burn her went out as soon as they came near her. Finally, she was condemned to death by beheading. Her father himself carried out the death-sentence. However, as punishment for this, he was struck by lightning on the way home and his body was consumed by flame. Barbara was buried by a Christian, Valentinus, and her tomb became the site of miracles.

Margaret, known as **Margaret of Antioch** in the West, and as **Saint Marina the Great Martyr** in the East, is said to have been martyred in 304, but was declared apocryphal by Pope Gelasius I in 494; however devotion to her revived in the West with the Crusades.

According to the version of the story in *Golden Legend*, she was a native of Antioch and the daughter of a pagan priest named Aedesius. Her mother having died soon after her birth, Margaret was nursed by a Christian woman. Having embraced Christianity and consecrated her virginity to God, Margaret was disowned by her father, adopted by her nurse, and lived in the country keeping sheep with her foster mother (in what is now Turkey). Olybrius, Governor of the Roman Diocese of the East, asked to marry her, but with the demand that she renounce Christianity. Upon her refusal, she was cruelly tortured, during which various miraculous incidents occurred. One of these involved being swallowed by Satan in the shape of a dragon, from which she escaped alive when the cross she carried irritated the dragon's innards. The Sisters of St. Margaret were named for this St. Margaret.

—http://www.satucket.com/lectionary/ancient_women_martyrs.html

Liturgy created with the following resources:

Book of Common Prayer, Enriching Our Worship, Saint Helena Breviary, A New Zealand Prayer Book and The Inclusive Bible, and resources for public use from other denominations as appropriate.