

Trinity 24

(There are three choices of propers for each office this week) Homilies are provided for Morning Prayer A, and Evening Prayer A. Others are to be written.

In 2009 this is the Sunday next before Advent; use the lessons and collect for that day.

In 2013 use the lessons for Third Sunday before Advent with today's collect.

Morning Prayer A

First Lesson: Mal 3:13-4:3

Second Lesson: Luke 10:17-24

Homily

"And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; "

What a marvelous expression!
Every monarchy has crown jewels.
Precious stones glint and shine from the crowns,
from the scepters,
on the clothing and the furniture,
everywhere one looks in the presence of royalty.
In the Revelation of St. John,
in the Prophet Ezekiel,
and elsewhere in sacred writings,

we find jewels presented as prominent
in heaven, in every place where God is found,
a testimony to His majesty
and to His love of beauty.
And now Malachi gives us another view.
When our God makes up His jewels,
when He ornaments His royal crown,
when He decorated the Throne of Heaven,
when He fills his Heavenly City
with diamonds and rubies and emeralds and pearls,
where does He get those jewels?
What are they really?

*"... they that feared the LORD
spake often one to another:
and the LORD hearkened, and heard it,
and a book of remembrance was written before him
for them that feared the LORD,
and that thought upon his name.*

*And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts,
in that day when I make up my jewels;
and I will spare them,"*

His jewels are not dug out of the earth.
They are not those things valued by this world.
They are the souls He has received to Himself.
It is not the proud and the powerful that He calls.
It is not the splendid and notable

that ornament His reign,
but those that allow Him to lead them in holiness.
Malachi says, speaking of what people value:

*"... we call the proud happy;
yea, they that work wickedness are set up."*

Isn't it true that we tend to look up to celebrities?
Don't we stand in awe before billionaires?
Doesn't human power make us tremble?

Sports stars, actors, successful businessmen,
the lifestyles of the rich and famous,
musicians, politicians, superstar preachers --
all of these get their praise and admiration,
but are they His jewels?
Do they have treasure that will last?

*"... behold, the day cometh,
that shall burn as an oven;
and all the proud,
yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble:
and the day that cometh shall burn them up,
saith the LORD of hosts, ..."*

Our Lord sent out seventy to represent Him.
As they spoke His Word they saw wonders happen,
and they returned, excited, feeling powerful,
saying:

*"Lord, even the devils are subject unto us
through thy name. "*

Ah, yes, there is power in the Name of Jesus.
He promised to fill His Church with power
when the Holy Ghost had come.
and, on the day of Pentecost, He came,
and they were filled.
Ah yes, the preaching of the Word of God
has changed the world, and continues to do so.
We have His Truth.
We have His presence.
We are His Church.
We can trust that He will be with us in His power.
Does that make us jewels?
Remember what He is portrayed as saying
at the final judgment to some that worked miracles
in His Name ...

"I never knew you!"

As He said to the returning seventy:

*"Notwithstanding in this rejoice not,
that the spirits are subject unto you;
but rather rejoice,
because your names are written in heaven."*

When our God makes up His jewels,

when He decorates his throne room
with things that are valuable to Him,
it will be with the beauty of transformed Christians,
of those who have come to Him
in repentance, in prayer, in seeking His Face,
in receiving the sacraments,
in showing forth a changed life,
and a new way of thinking.

Is that you?

It can be.

He wants it to be.

Let us pray.

Thanks be to thee, our Lord Jesus Christ,
for all the benefits which thou hast given us,
for all the pains and insults which thou hast borne for
us.

Most merciful Redeemer, Friend and Brother,
may we know thee more clearly,
love thee more dearly,
and follow thee more nearly,
day by day.

Amen.

Morning Prayer B

First Lesson: Ecclesiasticus 36:1-17

Second Lesson: 1 Tim 2:1-8

Homily to be written

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Morning Prayer C

First Lesson: Joshua 23:1-3, 11-16

Second Lesson: Luke 13:1-9

Homily to be written

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Evening Prayer A

First Lesson: Deut 33:1-3, 26-29

Second Lesson: Jude 1-4, 17-25

Homily

We have an interesting juxtaposition of lessons today

We began with extracts from a wonderful hymn of praise, ascribed to Moses as the last words before his death, words of praise to God, and of a blessing upon the people.

“The eternal God is thy refuge,”
said the prophet,

“and underneath are the everlasting arms:”

What a promise!

We can rely upon God to support us,
to hold us up,
to catch us when we fall.

... Israel then shall dwell in safety ...

As the Psalmist said,
*“Yea, though I walk in the valley
of the shadow of death, thou art with me.”*

Therefore, sang Moses:

*“Happy art thou, O Israel: ...
O people saved by the LORD,”*

and among those blessings, this:

*“... thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee;
and thou shalt tread upon their high places.”*

But the encouragement of blessed Moses is coupled today with some rather intimidating words from St. Jude.

“...there are certain men crept in unawares,”
he tells us,
*“... ungodly men,
turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness,
and denying the only Lord God,
and our Lord Jesus Christ. “*

This sounds rather like some of those we have left behind, doesn't it?

But finger pointing is not our concern today. St. Jude identifies these false teachers as those who have come into the church, who are respected members and leaders, but have brought with them

a message that smells of brimstone.
 There were indeed false teachers in the early Church,
 many different kinds of false teachers.

There were indeed
 those who encouraged lawlessness,
 who championed various forms of sexual license,
 sometimes even teaching that the more we sin,
 the more of the grace of forgiveness we receive,
 therefore, we should sin more.
 St. Paul had to deal with this one.
 His response? “God forbid!”
 St. Jude may have been referring to such as these,
 and that has a strikingly modern feel to it,
 doesn't it?

But then again, there were those
 who wanted to turn the Faith into a code of laws,
 often insisting on the observance of every detail
 of the Jewish ceremonial law.

St. Paul dealt with them just as harshly.
 That road produces attitudes
 that are anything but loving.
 Jesus Himself saw that in the Pharisees,
 and it is to this that we are severely tempted
 as a movement of those who are fleeing
 the lawless immorality so often proclaimed

back there in that other place.

Face it, we often take great pleasure
 in thundering out condemnation
 for those we perceive as wrong.

We prefer to be rid of them
 to leave them behind and forget about them,
 except when we can make ourselves look better
 by comparison.

Is that attitude any more pleasing to God
 than the other?

Is that the attitude Jesus had
 when He allowed Himself to be killed
 for your grievous sins and mine?
 Listen to what Jude had to say:

Keep yourselves in the love of God,

Love God.

Love neighbor.

Love your brethren.

Love your enemies.

Where there is not love,
 neither is there the blessing of God.

His grace has been turned into something ugly,
 a weapon to satisfy Our angry lusts,

no less lascivious than sexual sins.

*looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ
unto eternal life.*

*And of some have compassion,
making a difference:*

*And others save with fear,
pulling them out of the fire;*

hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

Listen well!

He tells us to reach down into the fire,
to seek out those who have erred,
to do everything in our power to rescue them.

To do it with fear --

now what does THAT mean?

perhaps to be aware that we may be burned?

You don't rush into a burning house
without the hazard of severe injury, do you?

You also don't save sinners

without taking the same chance of getting hurt.

Love takes chances, or it isn't love.

We've left people behind, because we had to,
but have we forgotten them?

Or are we still praying and reaching out?

Many of us have been mistreated here,
and have been judged falsely,

and have been hurt.

Do we flee in anger?

Do we start badmouthing those who wronged us?
or do we continue to love,

to pray,

and to reach back into the fire,

the same fire that already burned us?

Our own self-interest would put it one way,
but God's love is not like that.

Let us pray.

O Lord, we bessech thee, absolve thy people from
their offenses; that through thy bountiful goodness
we may all be delivered from the bands of those sins,
which by our frailty we have committed, and that we
may look upon our brethren in the fullness of thy
love, and give ourselves for them as thou hast for us,
O blessed Jesus, who livest and reignest with the
Father and the Holy Ghost, one God in glory
everlasting. Amen.

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Evening Prayer B

First Lesson: 2 Kings 4:18-37

Second Lesson: Matt 9:18-26

Homily to be written

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Evening Prayer C

First Lesson: 2 Chron 36:11-23

Second Lesson: Acts 28:16-31

Homily to be written