

St Francis Episcopal Church, San Jose, CA
Morning Prayer, Thursday, April 29, 2021
Commemoration of Catherine of Siena
Reformer and Spiritual Teacher, 1380

When 2 people are reading: READER 1: Plain Text *Reader 2: Italics* **Both: Bold**
If there are 2 lessons, a reading and subsequent canticle may be omitted.

You are invited to begin the service by lighting a candle.

Christ is Risen: *The world below lies desolate*

Christ is Risen: *The spirits of evil are fallen*

Christ is Risen: *The angels of God are rejoicing*

Christ is Risen: *The tombs of the dead are empty*

Christ is Risen indeed from the dead, the first of the sleepers,

Glory and power are his forever and ever.

*Hippolytus of Rome*¹

O Lord, open our lips
and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. **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.**

The night has passed, and the day lies open before us; let us pray with one heart and mind. As we rejoice in the gift of this new day, so may the light of your presence, O God, set our hearts on fire with love for you; now and forever. *Amen.*

Psalm 36

1 There is a voice of rebellion deep in the heart of the wicked; there is no fear of God before his eyes.

2 *He flatters himself in his own eyes that his hateful sin will not be found out.*

3 The words of his mouth are wicked and deceitful; he has left off acting wisely and doing good.

4 *He thinks up wickedness upon his bed and has set himself in no good way; he does not abhor that which is evil.*

5 Your love, O Lord, reaches to the heavens, and your faithfulness to the clouds.

6 *Your righteousness is like the strong mountains, your justice like the great deep; you save both man and beast, O Lord.*

7 How priceless is your love, O God! your people take refuge under the shadow of your wings.

8 *They feast upon the abundance of your house; you give them drink from the river of your delights.*

¹ <https://www.xavier.edu/jesuitresource/online-resources/prayer-index/lent,-easter,-and-spring-prayers>

9 For with you is the well of life, and in your light we see light.

10 Continue your loving-kindness to those who know you, and your favor to those who are true of heart.

11 Let not the foot of the proud come near me, nor the hand of the wicked push me aside.

12 See how they are fallen, those who work wickedness! they are cast down and shall not be able to rise.

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.

A reading from the First Letter of John

5 This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. ⁶If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; ⁷but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. ⁸If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; ²and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God

Jesus, Saviour of the world, come to us in your mercy: we look to you to save and help us.

By your cross and your life laid down, you set your people free: we look to you to save and help us.

When they were ready to perish, you saved your disciples: we look to you to come to our help.

In the greatness of your mercy, loose us from our chains, forgive the sins of all your people.

Make yourself known as our Saviour and mighty deliverer; save and help us that we may praise you.

Come now and dwell with us, Lord Christ Jesus: hear our prayer and be with us always.

And when you come in your glory: make us to be one with you and to share the life of your kingdom.²

A reading from the Gospel of Luke

2

<https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/common-worship/common-material/canticles-main-19>

22 He said to his disciples, 'Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear. ²³For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. ²⁴Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! ²⁵And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? ²⁶If then you are not able to do so small a thing as that, why do you worry about the rest? ²⁷Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. ²⁸But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith! ²⁹And do not keep striving for what you are to eat and what you are to drink, and do not keep worrying. ³⁰For it is the nations of the world that strive after all these things, and your Father knows that you need them. ³¹Instead, strive for his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.

The Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God.

**Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!
By his great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the
resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
Into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled and unfading, kept in heaven
for you,
Who are being protected by the power of God through faith, for a salvation, ready
to be revealed in the last time.
You were ransomed from the futile ways of your ancestors not with perishable
things like silver or gold
But with the precious blood of Christ like that of a lamb without spot or stain.
Through him we have confidence in God, who raised him from the dead and gave
him glory, so that your faith and hope are set on God.³ *1 Peter 1.3–5,18,19,21***

The Apostles' Creed

**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.**

3

<https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/common-worship/common-material/canticles-main-24>

**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

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.
Let us pray.

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Almighty and everlasting God, who kindled the flame of thy love in the heart of your servant Catherine of Siena: Grant unto us the same strength of conviction and power of love that, as we rejoice in her triumph, we may profit by her example; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Grant us, Lord God, a vision of your world as your love would have it:
a world where the weak are protected, and none go hungry or poor;
a world where the riches of creation are shared, and everyone can enjoy them;
a world where different races and cultures live in harmony and mutual respect;
a world where peace is built with justice, and justice is guided by love.
Give us the inspiration and courage to build it, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

O Christ, as we remember those who enjoyed your company and endeavor to know your presence in our lives, we remember that there are many people who are alone or rejected. We think of those whose ageing, illness or family circumstances mean that they feel as though no-one is truly with them. May we see more clearly where they are, O Christ, and be loyal friends to them in your name, we pray. *Amen*

If they are isolated because of any form of prejudice, looking longingly at the lives of those who have company and communities of support: Show us the beauty of all humanness, O Christ, and call us to draw near in love, we pray. *Amen.*

Give to us, your people, the courage and authenticity to share together the questions we have about life and faith. Help us to create an environment where honesty is possible, so that we genuinely discuss the tougher issues together. Then, when we hold in our hands the bread and the wine, may we recognise the wonder of the gift which lies there and receive it in truth as your life with us, O Christ. *Amen.*⁴

When our faith
stands at the grave,
grieving
for a stone that's rolled away,
forgive us.

When our faith
is short of
understanding
though the truth is there to see,
forgive us.

When our faith,
beset by doubt, sees
no further
than an empty tomb today,
forgive us.

Bring to mind
the cry of Mary,
'I have seen the Lord!'
*grant us faith to believe!*⁵

As Christ burst forth from the tomb, may new life burst forth from us and show itself in acts of love and healing to a hurting world. And may the same Christ, who lives forever and is the source of our new life, keep our hearts rejoicing and grant us peace this day and always. **Amen.**⁶

CATHERINE OF SIENA

REFORMER AND SPIRITUAL TEACHER (29 APR 1380)

Catherine Benincasa, born in 1347, was the youngest (one of my sources says the 23rd) of twenty-five children of a wealthy dyer of Sienna (or Siena). At the age of six, she had a vision of Christ in glory, surrounded by His saints. From that time on, she spent most of her time in prayer and

⁴ <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2012/03/prayers-of-people-emmaus-road.html>

⁵ <https://programminglife.net/5-more-easter-prayers/>

⁶ https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2013/02/easter-benediction_23.html



meditation, over the opposition of her parents, who wanted her to be more like the average girl of her social class. Eventually they gave in, and at the age of sixteen she joined the Third Order of St. Dominic (First Order = friars, Second Order = nuns, Third Order = laypersons), where she became a nurse, caring for patients with leprosy and advanced cancer whom other nurses disliked to treat.

She began to acquire a reputation as a person of insight and sound judgement, and many persons from all walks of life sought her spiritual advice, both in person and by letter. (We have a book containing about four hundred letters from her to bishops, kings, scholars, merchants, and obscure peasants.) She persuaded many priests who were living in luxury to give away their goods and to live simply.

In her day, the popes, officially Bishops of Rome, had been living for about seventy years, not at Rome but at Avignon in France, where they were under the political control of the King of France (the Avignon Papacy, sometimes called the Babylonian Captivity of the Papacy, began when Philip the Fair, King of France, captured Rome and the Pope in 1303). Catherine visited Avignon in 1376 and told Pope Gregory XI that he had no business to live away from Rome. He heeded her advice, and moved to Rome. She then acted as his ambassador to Florence, and was able to reconcile a quarrel between the Pope and the leaders of that city. She then retired to Sienna, where she wrote a book called the *Dialog*, an account of her visions and other spiritual experiences, with advice on cultivating a life of prayer.

After Gregory's death in 1378, the Cardinals, mostly French, elected an Italian Pope, Urban VI, who on attaining office turned out to be arrogant and abrasive and tyrannical, and perhaps to have other faults as well. The Cardinals met again elsewhere, declared that the first election had been under duress from the Roman mob and therefore invalid, and elected a new Pope, Clement VII, who established his residence at Avignon. Catherine worked tirelessly, both to persuade Urban to mend his ways (her letters to him are respectful but severe and uncompromising -- as one historian has said, she perfected the art of kissing the Pope's feet while simultaneously twisting his arm), and to persuade others that the peace and unity of the Church required the recognition of Urban as lawful Pope. Despite her efforts, the Papal Schism continued until 1417. It greatly weakened the prestige of the Bishops of Rome, and thus helped to pave the way for the Protestant Reformation a century later.

Catherine is known (1) as a mystic, a contemplative who devoted herself to prayer, (2) as a humanitarian, a nurse who undertook to alleviate the suffering of the poor and the sick; (3) as an activist, a renewer of Church and society, who took a strong stand on the issues affecting society in her day, and who never hesitated (in the old Quaker phrase) "to speak truth to power"; (4) as an adviser and counselor, with a wide range of interests, who always made time for troubled and uncertain persons who told her their problems -- large and trivial, religious and secular.

by James Kiefer

http://www.satucket.com/lectionary/Catherine_Siena.htm