

Reading for the Feast of St Catherine of Siena

29th April 2024

First reading

1 John 1:5-2:2

The blood of Jesus Christ purifies us all from sin

This is what we have heard from Jesus Christ,
and the message that we are announcing to you:
God is light; there is no darkness in him at all.

If we say that we are in union with God
while we are living in darkness,
we are lying because we are not living the truth.

But if we live our lives in the light,
as he is in the light,
we are in union with one another,
and the blood of Jesus, his Son,
purifies us from all sin.

If we say we have no sin in us,
we are deceiving ourselves
and refusing to admit the truth;
but if we acknowledge our sins,
then God who is faithful and just
will forgive our sins and purify us
from everything that is wrong.

To say that we have never sinned
is to call God a liar
and to show that his word is not in us.

I am writing this, my children,
to stop you sinning;
but if anyone should sin,
we have our advocate with the Father,
Jesus Christ, who is just;
he is the sacrifice that takes our sins away,
and not only ours,
but the whole world's.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 102(103):1-4,8-9,13-14,17-18

My soul, give thanks to the Lord
all my being, bless his holy name.

My soul, give thanks to the Lord
and never forget all his blessings.

It is he who forgives all your guilt,
who heals every one of your ills,
who redeems your life from the grave,

who crowns you with love and compassion.

The Lord is compassion and love,
slow to anger and rich in mercy.
His wrath will come to an end;
he will not be angry for ever.

As a father has compassion on his sons,
the Lord has pity on those who fear him;
for he knows of what we are made,
he remembers that we are dust.

But the love of the Lord is everlasting
upon those who hold him in fear;
his justice reaches out to children's children
when they keep his covenant in truth,
when they keep his will in their mind.

Gospel Acclamation

Mt11:25

Alleluia, alleluia!
Blessed are you, Father,
Lord of heaven and earth,
for revealing the mysteries of the kingdom
to mere children.
Alleluia!

Gospel

Matthew 11:25-30

You have hidden these things from the wise and revealed them to little children

Jesus exclaimed, 'I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and of earth, for hiding these things from the learned and the clever and revealing them to mere children. Yes, Father, for that is what it pleased you to do. Everything has been entrusted to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, just as no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

'Come to me, all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest. Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Yes, my yoke is easy and my burden light.'

Short reflection on the readings for today

Catherine had her first vision of Christ when she was age five or six, saying that Jesus smiled at her, blessed her, and left her in ecstasy, but mysticism did not withdraw her from the world. She became a Dominican Sister. She was deeply involved in what was happening in Europe and in the church in her time. It was she who persuaded Pope Gregory XI to return to Rome from Avignon, insisting that the Pope's place was beside the bones of the martyrs. Shortly after his return, Pope Gregory died. He was

succeeded by Pope Urban VI who turned out to be a disastrous Pope. The cardinals regretted their decision and elected a second Pope but could not persuade Pope Urban to retire. The church now had two rival Popes, one in Rome and one in Avignon, an unfortunate situation that was to last for several decades.

Catherine remained faithful to Urban, in spite of his faults because he had been duly elected. She was convinced that the wound in the body of Christ could only be healed by great sacrifice. She prayed that she might atone for the sins of the church, and shortly afterwards collapsed and died. Catherine stood out as a beacon of light in a dark time. That is the calling of each one of us. We are all called to be mystics to some degree. The Lord's invitation, "Come to me, all who labour and are overburdened," is addressed to us all. He calls out to all of us to come to him, to know and love him as he knows and loves us. In calling us to himself he also sends us into the world afire with the flame of his love.