

Reading for the Feast of St Catherine of Siena

April 29th 2026

First reading

1 John 1:5-2:2

‘The blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin.’

Beloved: This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practise the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say 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. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 103(102):1-2. 3-4. 8-9. 13-14. 17-18a. R1a

Bless the Lord, O my soul.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all within me, his holy name.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and never forget all his benefits.

It is the Lord who forgives all your sins, who heals every one of your ills,
who redeems your life from the grave, who crowns you with mercy and compassion.

The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and rich in mercy.

He will not always find fault; nor persist in his anger for ever.

As a father has compassion on his children, the Lord's compassion is on those who fear him.

For he knows of what we are made; he remembers that we are dust.

But the mercy of the Lord is everlasting upon those who hold him in fear,

upon children's children his justice, for those who keep his covenant.

Gospel Acclamation

Cf. Matthew 11:25

Alleluia, alleluia.

I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth,
you have revealed the secrets of the kingdom to little children.

Alleluia.

Gospel

Matthew 11:25-30

‘I am gentle and lowly in heart.’

At that time Jesus declared, ‘I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.’

Short reflection on the reading for today

Catherine of Siena's mysticism did not withdraw her from the world. 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.