

St. Philip the Apostle
Roman Catholic Church

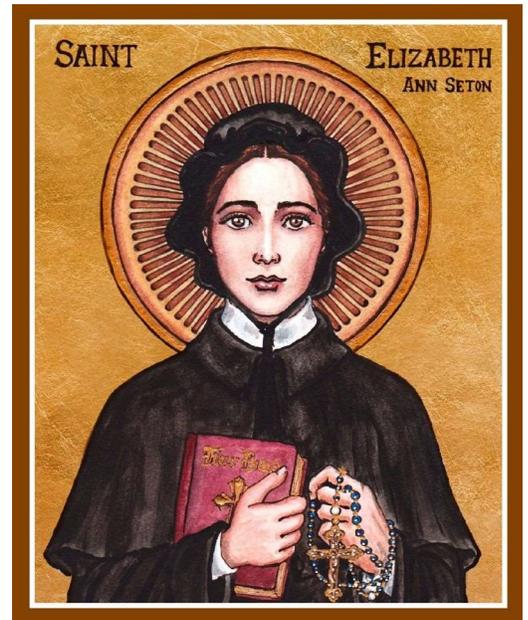
Monday, January 4, 2021

-- Memorial of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

-- Fr. Sherdel's Morning Mass Intention: ***Ethel Collmer***

First Reading: 1 John 3:22—4:6

Beloved: We receive from him whatever we ask, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him. And his commandment is this: we should believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another just as he commanded us. Those who keep his commandments remain in him, and he in them, and the way we know that he remains in us is from the Spirit whom he gave us.



Beloved, do not trust every spirit but test the spirits to see whether they belong to God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. This is how you can know the Spirit of God: every spirit that acknowledges Jesus Christ come in the flesh belongs to God, and every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus does not belong to God. This is the spirit of the antichrist who, as you heard, is to come, but in fact is already in the world. You belong to God, children, and you have conquered them, for the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. They belong to the world; accordingly, their teaching belongs to the world, and the world listens to them. We belong to God, and anyone who knows God listens to us, while anyone who does not belong to God refuses to hear us. This is how we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of deceit.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 2:7-8, 10-12

I will give you all the nations for an inheritance.

The Lord said to me, "You are my Son;
this day I have begotten you.

Ask of me and I will give you
the nations for an inheritance
and the ends of the earth for your possession." ***R/.***

And now, O kings, give heed;
take warning, you rulers of the earth.
Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice before him;
with trembling rejoice. ***R/.***

Gospel: Matthew 4:12-17, 23-25

When Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. He left Nazareth and went to live in Capernaum by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali, that what had been said through Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled:

Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the way to the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, the people who sit in darkness have seen a great light, on those dwelling in a land overshadowed by death light has arisen.

From that time on, Jesus began to preach and say, "Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand."

He went around all of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom, and curing every disease and illness among the people. His fame spread to all of Syria, and they brought to him all who were sick with various diseases and racked with pain, those who were possessed, lunatics, and paralytics, and he cured them. And great crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, and Judea, and from beyond the Jordan followed him.

Reflection

This is the spirit of the antichrist. (1 John 4:3)

Many have speculated over the centuries about the "antichrist," referred to here and in several other places in John's letters. But the word simply means someone who is opposed to Christ. In John's time, that included people who claimed to be Christian but who rejected the truth that Jesus was both fully human and fully divine. These were the false teachers he was writing about — those who didn't acknowledge "Jesus Christ come in the flesh" (1 John 4:2).

Why did these people struggle so much with a God who became a human being? Perhaps it's because they could not imagine an all-holy God who would stoop so low as to take on our flesh. Some thought all physical reality was evil, so it was inconceivable to them that God would do such a thing. Instead, they believed that Jesus came only in the "form" of a human body.

But the Incarnation — God becoming man — is one of the central mysteries of our faith. It is at the heart of the Creed we recite at Mass, and it is the basis for our belief in Jesus' presence in the Eucharist. We might be tempted to view physical reality somewhat as these false teachers did — as tainted in some way. And that could lead us to think of ourselves primarily as souls who will one day be freed of their bodies to enjoy a "pure" union with God in heaven forever.

That view fails to take into account two important truths. First, because God is all-good, everything that he created is good. As we see in Genesis, he is delighted with his creation; he even calls it "very good" (1:31). Original sin corrupted our human nature and physical reality, but that never was God's design or intention.

Second, Jesus didn't come in the flesh to save just our souls. If he had, he wouldn't have risen bodily and then ascended bodily into heaven. When Jesus comes again, we too will be resurrected, and we will see Jesus — God and man.

The Incarnation redeemed us — all of us, body and soul. As we look forward to our future destiny, may we always recognize the goodness of God's creation!

Jesus, I believe that everything you have made is good.

An Act of Spiritual Communion

My Jesus,
I believe that You
are present in the Most Holy Sacrament
I love You above all things,
and I desire to receive You into my soul.
Since I cannot at this moment
receive You sacramentally,
come at least spiritually into my heart.
I embrace You as if You were already there
and unite myself wholly to You.
Never permit me to be separated from You.
Amen.

Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel

St. Michael the Archangel,
defend us in battle.
Be our defense against the wickedness and snares of the Devil.
May God rebuke him, we humbly pray,
and do thou,
O Prince of the heavenly hosts,
by the power of God,
thrust into hell Satan,
and all the evil spirits,
who prowl about the world
seeking the ruin of souls.
Amen.