

Daily Office Devotional, Friday, October 9, 2008
Proper 22, the week of the eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost
The Rev. David W. Perkins, Th.D.

Daily Office Lectionary Readings

AM Psalm 140, 142; PM Psalm 141, 143:1-11(12)

Micah 3:9-4:5; Acts 24:24-25:12; Luke 8:1-15

Today we celebrate the Feast of Robert Grosseteste. (See below.)

Morning Prayer, Rite 2, page 75, Book of Common Prayer

Evening Prayer, Rite 2, page 115, Book of Common Prayer

Compline (Night Prayer), Page 127, Book of Common Prayer

Daily Office Old Testament Reading, Micah 3:9-4:5

9Hear this, you rulers of the house of Jacob and chiefs of the house of Israel, who abhor justice and pervert all equity, 10who build Zion with blood and Jerusalem with wrong! 11Its rulers give judgment for a bribe, its priests teach for a price, its prophets give oracles for money; yet they lean upon the LORD and say, "Surely the LORD is with us! No harm shall come upon us." 12Therefore because of you Zion shall be plowed as a field; Jerusalem shall become a heap of ruins, and the mountain of the house a wooded height.

4:1In days to come the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised up above the hills. Peoples shall stream to it, 2and many nations shall come and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. 3He shall judge between many peoples, and shall arbitrate between strong nations far away; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more; 4but they shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees, and no one shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken. 5For all the peoples walk, each in the name of its god, but we will walk in the name of the LORD our God forever and ever.

David's Reflections

Carol Lee Flinders writes of the power of vision when she says, "For anything like a revolution to take place, it must be imagined first. Before we can mobilize the energy to move toward a better world, we must have begun to envision it." *

Micah's prophetic imagination reaches far beyond the harsh realities of his nation's peril to a new day, a day when God's reign has been fully realized on earth. How daring to envision the tiny kingdom of Judah as the spiritual center of this new world! Yet, Micah does so. How daring to imagine a world without war and terror, yet Micah does so. How daring to imagine a world free of oppression, yet Micah does so.

Micah's vision paints the nature of God in vivid hues. God resists chaos, terror, war, and injustice. God intends an existence for us purged of those forms of suffering and evil. And, God can work within the realities of chaos to create order and wholeness on the ash heap of that chaos. Given our current chaotic existence in the rip tides of pandemic, today's text feels especially encouraging and hope-giving.

We find some of the loveliest language and some of the most compelling images in the Old Testament here. "They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks." Imagine a world where the money and energy poured into weapons and into warfare gets diverted into humanitarian causes.

Just how daring can we be in the casting of a vision? Will we shrink in terror before the raging chaos in which we live? Or will we take courage in Jesus' presence and in the vision of his resurrection as our future? If we find ourselves gripped by a vision of God's new creation, then we can find the energy to make war on the chaos nearest at hand in our world. What chaos might elude our resistance in grace, God's final acts of salvation in the coming of new creation will wash away in a flood-tide of peace and justice.

"Before we can mobilize the energy toward a better world, we must have begun to envision it." * What kind of new creation can you imagine? What steps could you take today to begin living into that vision?

* Carol Lee Flinders, *At the Root of This Longing: Reconciling a Spiritual Hunger and a Feminist Thirst* (New York: HarperCollins, 1998), p. 144

Collect of the Day: Proper 22, the eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Almighty and everlasting God, you are always more ready to hear than we to pray, and to give more than we either desire or deserve: Pour upon us the abundance of your mercy, forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid, and giving us those good things for which we are not worthy to ask, except through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ our Savior; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.* (BCP, 234)

Today we celebrate the Feast of Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of London (died 9 Oct 1253 CE). http://www.satucket.com/lectionary/Robert_Grosseteste.htm

Collect of the Feast of Robert Grosseteste

O God, our heavenly Father, who raised up your faithful servant Robert Grosseteste to be a bishop and pastor in your church and to feed your flock: Give abundantly to all pastors the gifts of your Holy Spirit, that they may minister in your household as true servants of Christ and stewards of your divine mysteries; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

A Collect for Fridays

Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: Mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.* (BCP, 97)

For those in the Armed Forces of our Country

Almighty God, we commend to your gracious care and keeping all the men and women of our armed forces at home and abroad. Defend them day by day with your heavenly grace; strengthen them in their trials and temptations; give them courage to face the perils which beset them; and grant them a sense of your abiding presence wherever they may be; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.* (BCP, 823)

A Prayer for Light

Lighten our darkness, we beseech you, O Lord; and by your great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night; for the love of your only Son, Jesus Christ, *Amen.* (BCP, 111)

A Collect for Mission

O God of all the nations of the earth: Remember the multitudes who have been created in your image but have not known the redeeming work of our Savior Jesus Christ; and grant that, by the prayers and labors of your holy Church, they may be brought to know and worship you as you have been revealed in your Son; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. (BCP, 257)