

30.9.69

J. Alain: Litanies

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The angel of the Lord <sup>brought word to</sup> ~~descended to~~ Mary / And she conceived <sup>by</sup> the Holy Spirit :  
 Behold the handmaid of the Lord / <sup>Let</sup> ~~be~~ it <sup>be</sup> done to me according to thy word :  
 And the Word was made flesh / And dwelt among us : HAIL MARY full of grace, the Lord  
 is with thee, blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, JESUS.  
 Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.  
 Pray for us, Holy mother of God / That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.  
 Pour forth we beseech thee O Lord, thy grace into our hearts: that we to whom the  
 incarnation of Christ thy Son was made known by the message of an angel, may by this  
 passion and ~~cross~~ <sup>CROSS</sup> be brought to the glory of his resurrection. Through the same Xt. our Lord  
 Amen.

FADE

Good afternoon; and welcome to join again in our 1/2 hr programme of Midday Prayer.  
 After being off the air for the last few months, Midday Prayer and its early-morning companion 7.35  
 have returned this week; and we hope those of you who have missed these programmes, especially  
 those of you sick or in hospital who have been enquiring about when they'd come back,  
 will be encouraged and helped by their return. One change has been made, in these  
 Midday Prayers: on Saturdays we will be presenting a longer programme which will contain  
 interludes of light classical music and modern or unusual religious music, as well as  
 some reading and a repeat of one of the week's 7.35 programmes, which this month  
 will be the Saturday "Point of View". As a result of this change, there's a slight  
 alteration in the sequence of denominations for these Midday Prayers. You'll be hearing  
 me on Mondays and Saturdays for the present. As today is the feast of St Jerome, I

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 want to say something about him and about the Scriptures he spent his life's work translating  
 into the modern language of the day. But first let us pray together, in the prayer  
 familiar to us, and in a prayer written by St. Jerome himself. PRAYERS.

I'd like you to listen now to a modern setting of some words of Scripture, a <sup>story</sup> told by  
 June. Because it's from the Scriptures, there's a message of God in this - the music is an  
 attempt to make it easier and more attractive for us to take in God's word: so, in its  
 own way, it's a prayer too, if we try to use it the way these singing men intended it,  
 even if St. Jerome might not have approved.

"He bought the whole  
 field"  
 ["I know the secret"]

St Jerome lived from about 347 to 419 or 20. An Italian, he went to Palestine  
 to trace out and live in the places where Jesus lived on earth, and spent a number of  
 years there as a monk - hermit in prayer and contemplation. For 40 odd years he retired  
 to the Syrian desert to live alone, carefully reading and recitating on the Bible. Later  
 he had himself ordained by the Bishop of Antioch, and returned to spend the rest of his life  
 in Palestine, mainly in Bethlehem where he died at an advanced age. It was there that  
 he undertook, at the request of Pope Damasus, the translation <sup>& compilation</sup> of the entire Bible into  
 what became known as the Vulgate Latin version. Besides Greek & Latin, he was fluent  
 in Hebrew and a number of other languages of the Middle East. His monumental task,  
 for his era, is something to excite admiration and awe today when we're more aware  
 of the difficulties of translating Scripture, a task which now is normally done by a  
 group of people. Algor. Radd. Knox, who <sup>first</sup> translated the Bible into English for present-day  
 Catholics - took 9 years to do it, is one of the very few men to have attempted anything

like that — and many find fault with or dislike his effort. In the pictures & sculptures of him, done mainly in the Renaissance & Baroque periods, St Jerome often appears as a crusty, ~~the~~ bearded, forbidding-looking old man. But the many letters he left give a different impression. He corresponded with St Augustine & Pope Damasus, among many others, on questions of Scripture and doctrine as well as other topics; most of the letters though, were addressed to a congregation of men he established — and they're all of great interest & humanity, not without touches of humor and sometimes hard-hitting comment — he didn't suffer fools gladly. Well-known and articulate, he seems to have been warm and charming, though a formidable man to cross swords (or pens) with. His life-dedication to the word of God in Scripture should give us encouragement today to nourish our Christian life & understanding on those same scriptures. Prayer, after all, is communication between us and God: in prayerful reading of scripture, it is the word of God speaking to us, his message & ideas which we should listen to. We're always inclined to think of prayer (and <sup>so</sup> tend to shy away from it) as ourselves doing all the talking, asking, praising, thanking, whatever. And we feel we've nothing much to say. If we'd only try first to listen to what God ~~says~~ <sup>wants</sup> to say to us, what he wants to communicate of himself, we wouldn't find our part of it so difficult. And the best way to set about doing this is to take up the New Testament, or the old, and try to read it in this spirit. St. Jerome would approve — and no doubt he'd be interested in your progress and be able to give a helping hand of intercession for you to understand the word of God.