

# **The City Church, New York**

**The Prayer of Thanksgiving and Intercession – Sunday January 22, 2006**

John Dykes composed Nicaea, the music for the Sanctus we sing each Sunday. It was on this day in 1876, that he was called into the holiest of holies, the very Presence of the One he'd praised all his days. Let us pray.

O Holy One: Angels and archangels sing Your praise: "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty." And we would join in the cosmic choir: "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty, the Great I AM" – for there is none other. There is none like You.

But we can go further than the adoration of the angels and we can go deeper than all their praise. We can go further than they. For unlike angels who've never known what it is to be forgiven as we have been forgiven, for they never rejected Your love and never rebelled against Your grace, we have received grace upon grace. Where our sin abounds, Your grace abounds greater. We, rebellious but redeemed children, wish to praise You for what we've received in the crucified and risen Messiah, our Savior and Lord. These are mercies of which angels hear only rumors. But they are mercies that we know in remorse, repentance, and redemption full and free for which we rejoice. So, as we have done again in this morning's Sanctus, we do again in this morning's prayer, we turn to You with glad and grateful hearts for all we've been given by You, the "Merciful and the Mighty" One, the everlasting I AM, and our ever loving and dearly beloved Father.

Help us to realize that You hold us accountable for passing on the gift of Your unearned love to all others, including our enemies. We thank You for those who passed it on to us – including our brother John, who's homecoming we celebrate today.

Lord, at this time in the church year, as we recall the infants slaughtered by Herod, may we remember all the children who, as we see in our daily papers, are still in danger from cruel and callous adults. Help us to do all we can to rescue them and keep them safe.

We pray for this congregation as well as for our brethren around the world. Many are living under anti-Christian tyranny and they risk life and limb to worship You. May they feel You close by, as, indeed, You are. Keep them faithful. Keep us faithful, too.

We pray our prayer in Jesus' name and we add the words he taught us to pray, saying:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day, our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.