

COLLECT

O Lord, raise up, we pray, your power and come among us, and with great might succour us; that whereas, through our sins and wickedness we are grievously hindered in running the race that is set before us, your bountiful grace and mercy may speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, to whom with you and the Holy Spirit, be honour and glory, now and for ever.

FIRST READING Isaiah 40:1-11

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken." A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" "All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand for ever. Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!" See, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather

the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

PSALM Psalm 85:1-2. 8-13
(or 85:8-13)



R Show us your mercy, O Lord.

Lord, you were gracious to your land; you restored the fortunes of Jacob. You forgave the offence of your people and covered all their sins. **R**

I will listen to what the Lord God will say, for he shall speak peace to his people and to the faithful, that they turn not again to folly. Truly, his salvation is near to those who fear him, that his glory may dwell in our land. **R**

Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other; Truth shall spring up from the earth and righteousness look down from heaven. **R**

The Lord will indeed give all that is good, and our land will yield its increase. Righteousness shall go before him and direct his steps in the way. **R**

SECOND READING

2 Peter 3:8-15a

A reading from the second letter of Peter.

Do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed. Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness,

waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home. Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.

GOSPEL Mark 1:1-8

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark.

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,'" John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

POST COMMUNION

Father in heaven, who sent your Son to redeem the world and will send him again to be our judge: give us grace so to imitate him in the humility and purity of his first coming that, when he comes again, we may be ready to greet him with joyful love and firm faith; through Jesus Christ our Lord.



Show us your mer-cy, O Lord.

COLLECT

O Lord Jesus Christ,
 who at your first coming sent your
 messenger
 to prepare your way before you:
 grant that the ministers and stewards of
 your mysteries
 may likewise so prepare and make ready
 your way
 by turning the hearts of the disobedient to
 the wisdom of the just,
 that at your second coming to judge the
 world
 we may be found an acceptable people in
 your sight;
 for you are alive and reign with the Father
 in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
 one God, now and for ever.

FIRST READING

Isaiah 61:1-4. 8-11

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

The servant of the LORD said: The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion – to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, to display his glory. They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations. For I the LORD love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed. I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and

as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

PSALM OR CANTICLE

Either **Psalm 126**

R *The Lord has done great things for us.*

When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion,
 then were we like those who dream.
 Then was our mouth filled with laughter
 and our tongue with songs of joy. **R**

Then said they among the nations,
 "The Lord has done great things
 for them."

The Lord has indeed done great things
 for us,
 and therefore we rejoiced. **R**

Restore again our fortunes, O Lord,
 as the river beds of the desert.
 Those who sow in tears
 shall reap with songs of joy.
 Those who go out weeping, bearing
 the seed,
 will come back with shouts of joy,
 bearing their sheaves with them. **R**

Or **Luke 1:46b-55**

R *My spirit rejoices in God my Saviour.*

My soul proclaims the greatness of
 the Lord;
 My spirit rejoices in God my Saviour.
 For he has looked with favour on his lowly
 servant;
 from this day all generations will call me
 blessed.

The Almighty has done great things
 for me,
 and holy is his name. **R**

He has mercy on those who fear him
 in every generation.
 He has shown the strength of his arm;
 he has scattered the proud in their
 conceit. **R**

He has cast down the mighty from
 their thrones
 and has lifted up the lowly.
 He has filled the hungry with good things
 and the rich he has sent away empty. **R**

He has come to the help of his servant,
 Israel,
 for he has remembered his promise
 of mercy.

The promise he made to our forebears:
 to Abraham and his children for ever. **R**

SECOND READING

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Thessalonians.

My brothers and sisters, rejoice always,
 pray without ceasing, give thanks in all
 circumstances; for this is the will of God
 in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench
 the Spirit. Do not despise the words of
 prophets, but test everything; hold fast
 to what is good; abstain from every form
 of evil. May the God of peace himself
 sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit
 and soul and body be kept sound and
 blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus
 Christ. The one who calls you is faithful,
 and he will do this.

GOSPEL John 1:6-8. 19-28

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,'" as the prophet Isaiah said. Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

POST COMMUNION

We give you thanks, O Lord, for these heavenly gifts;
 kindle in us the fire of your Spirit
 that when your Christ comes again
 we may shine as lights before his face;
 who is alive and reigns now and for ever.



COLLECT

God our redeemer,
 who prepared the Blessed Virgin Mary
 to be the mother of your Son:
 grant that, as she looked for his coming as
 our saviour,
 so we may be ready to greet him
 when he comes again as our judge;
 who is alive and reigns with you,
 in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
 one God, now and for ever.

FIRST READING

2 Samuel 7:1-11. 16

A reading from the second book of Samuel.

Now when David the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, the king said to the prophet Nathan, "See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent." Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you." But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?" Now therefore you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the LORD of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the Lord declares to you, David, that the Lord will make you a house. Your

house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever.

CANTICLE OR PSALM

Either **Luke 1:46b-55**

Or **Psalm 89:1-4. 19-26 (or 89:1-8)**

R *Truly the Lord is our shield.*



My song shall be always of the loving-kindness of the Lord:
 with my mouth will I proclaim your faithfulness
 throughout all generations.
 I will declare that your love is established for ever;
 you have set your faithfulness as firm as the heavens. **R**

For you said: "I have made a covenant with my chosen one;
 I have sworn an oath to David my servant:
 "Your seed will I establish for ever and build up your throne for all generations." **R**

You spoke once in a vision and said to your faithful people:
 "I have set a youth above the mighty;
 I have raised a young man over the people.
 "I have found David my servant;
 with my holy oil have I anointed him. **R**

"My hand shall hold him fast and my arm shall strengthen him.
 "No enemy shall deceive him, nor any wicked person afflict him.
 "I will strike down his foes before his face and beat down those that hate him. **R**
 "My truth also and my steadfast love shall be with him
 and in my name shall his head be exalted.
 "I will set his dominion upon the sea and his right hand upon the rivers. **R**

"He shall call to me, 'You are my Father, my God, and the rock of my salvation;'" **R**

SECOND READING

Romans 16:25-27

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

To God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but is now

disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith – to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory for ever! Amen.

GOSPEL Luke 1:26-38

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end. Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

POST COMMUNION

Heavenly Father,
 who chose the Blessed Virgin Mary to be the mother of the promised saviour;
 fill us your servants with your grace,
 that in all things we may embrace your holy will
 and with her rejoice in your salvation;
 through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Tru - ly the Lord is our shield.

COLLECT

Almighty God,
 you have given us your only-begotten
 Son
 to take our nature upon him
 and as at this time to be born of a
 pure virgin:
 grant that we, who have been born
 again
 and made your children by adoption
 and grace,
 may daily be renewed by your Holy
 Spirit;
 through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
 who is alive and reigns with you,
 in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
 one God, now and for ever.

FIRST READING

Isaiah 52:7-10

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

How beautiful upon the mountains
 are the feet of the messenger who
 announces peace, who brings good
 news, who announces salvation, who
 says to Zion, "Your God reigns."
 Listen! Your sentinels lift up their
 voices, together they sing for joy;
 for in plain sight they see the return
 of the LORD to Zion. Break forth
 together into singing, you ruins of
 Jerusalem; for the LORD has
 comforted his people, he has
 redeemed Jerusalem. The LORD
 has bared his holy arm before the
 eyes of all the nations; and all the
 ends of the earth shall see the
 salvation of our God.

PSALM Psalm 98

R *Sing to the Lord a new song,
 for he has done marvellous things.*

Sing to the Lord a new song,
 for he has done marvellous things.
 His own right hand and his holy arm
 have won for him the victory.
 The Lord has made known his
 salvation; his deliverance has he
 openly shown in the sight of the
 nations. **R**

He has remembered his mercy and
 faithfulness towards the house of
 Israel,
 and all the ends of the earth have
 seen the salvation of our God.

Sound praises to the Lord, all the earth
 break into singing and make music. **R**

Make the music to the Lord with the
 lyre,
 with the lyre and the voice of melody.
 With trumpets and the sound of the
 horn
 sound praises before the Lord, the
 King. **R**

Let the sea thunder and all that fills it,
 the world and all that dwell upon it.
 Let the rivers clap their hands
 and let the hills ring out together
 before the Lord,
 for he comes to judge the earth.
 In righteousness shall he judge the
 world,
 and the peoples with equity. **R**

SECOND READING

Hebrews 1:1-4 [5-12]

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.

Long ago God spoke to our ancestors
 in many and various ways by the
 prophets, but in these last days he
 has spoken to us by a Son, whom he
 appointed heir of all things, through
 whom he also created the worlds. He
 is the reflection of God's glory and
 the exact imprint of God's very being,
 and he sustains all things by his
 powerful word. When he had made
 purification for sins, he sat down at
 the right hand of the Majesty on high,
 having become as much superior to
 angels as the name he has inherited
 is more excellent than theirs. [For
 to which of the angels did God ever
 say, "You are my Son; today I have
 begotten you"? Or again, "I will be
 his Father, and he will be my Son"?
 And again, when he brings the
 firstborn into the world, he says, "Let
 all God's angels worship him." Of the
 angels he says, "He makes his angels
 winds, and his servants flames of fire."
 But of the Son he says, "Your throne,
 O God, is for ever and ever, and
 the righteous sceptre is the sceptre
 of your kingdom. You have loved
 righteousness and hated wickedness;
 therefore God, your God, has
 anointed you with the oil of gladness

beyond your companions." And, "In
 the beginning, Lord, you founded
 the earth, and the heavens are the
 work of your hands; they will perish,
 but you remain; they will all wear out
 like clothing; like a cloak you will roll
 them up, and like clothing they will be
 changed. But you are the same, and
 your years will never end."] **R**

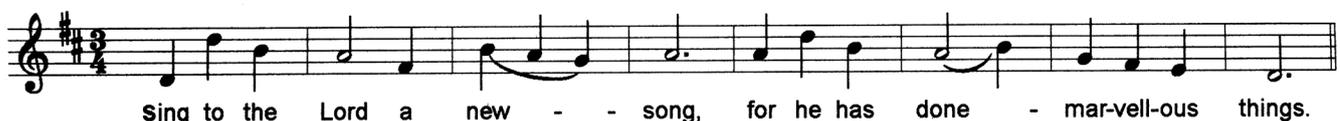
GOSPEL John 1:1-14

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

In the beginning was the Word,
 and the Word was with God, and
 the Word was God. He was in the
 beginning with God. All things came
 into being through him, and without
 him not one thing came into being.
 What has come into being in him
 was life, and the life was the light
 of all people. The light shines in the
 darkness, and the darkness did not
 overcome it. There was a man sent
 from God, whose name was John.
 He came as a witness to testify to the
 light, so that all might believe through
 him. He himself was not the light, but
 he came to testify to the light. The
 true light, which enlightens everyone,
 was coming into the world. He was
 in the world, and the world came into
 being through him; yet the world did
 not know him. He came to what was
 his own, and his own people did not
 accept him. But to all who received
 him, who believed in his name, he
 gave power to become children of
 God, who were born, not of blood or
 of the will of the flesh or of the will
 of man but of God. And the Word
 became flesh and lived among us,
 and we have seen his glory, the glory
 as of a father's only son, full of grace
 and truth.

POST COMMUNION

God our Father,
 whose Word has come among us
 in the Holy Child of Bethlehem:
 may the light of faith illumine our
 hearts and shine in our words and
 deeds;
 through him who is Christ the Lord.



COLLECT

Almighty God,
who wonderfully created us in your
own image
and yet more wonderfully restored us
through your Son Jesus Christ:
grant that, as he came to share in
our humanity,
so we may share the life of his
divinity;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

FIRST READING

Isaiah 61:10 – 62:3

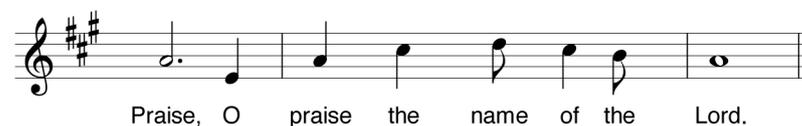
A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,
my whole being shall exult in my
God; for he has clothed me with the
garments of salvation, he has covered
me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself with
a garland, and as a bride adorns
herself with her jewels. For as the
earth brings forth its shoots, and as
a garden causes what is sown in it
to spring up, so the Lord GOD will
cause righteousness and praise to
spring up before all the nations. For
Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and
for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,
until her vindication shines out like
the dawn, and her salvation like a
burning torch. The nations shall see
your vindication, and all the kings
your glory; and you shall be called by
a new name that the mouth of the
LORD will give. You shall be a crown
of beauty in the hand of the LORD,
and a royal diadem in the hand of
your God.

PSALM Psalm 148 (or 148:7-end)

R Praise, O praise the name of the Lord.

Alleluia.
Praise the Lord from the heavens;
praise him in the heights.



Praise him, all you his angels;
praise him, all his host. **R**

Praise him, sun and moon;
praise him, all you stars of light.
Praise him, heaven of heavens,
and you waters above the heavens. **R**

Let them praise the name of the
Lord;
for he commanded and they were
created.
He made them fast for ever and ever;
he gave them a law which shall not
pass away. **R**

Praise the Lord from the earth,
you sea monsters and all deeps;
Fire and hail, snow and mist,
tempestuous wind, fulfilling his word;
Mountains and all hills,
fruit trees and all cedars;
Wild beasts and all cattle,
creeping things and birds on the
wing; **R**

Kings of the earth and all peoples,
princes and all rulers of the world;
Young men and women,
old and young together;
let them praise the name of the
Lord. **R**

For his name only is exalted,
his splendour above earth and
heaven.
He has raised up the horn of his
people
and praise for all his faithful servants,
the children of Israel, a people who
are near him.
Alleluia. **R**

SECOND READING

Galatians 4:4-7

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Galatians.

When the fullness of time had come,
God sent his Son, born of a woman,
born under the law, in order to
redeem those who were under the law,
so that we might receive adoption
as children. And because you are
children, God has sent the Spirit

of his Son into our hearts, crying,
"Abba! Father!" So you are no
longer a slave but a child, and if a
child then also an heir, through God.

GOSPEL Luke 2:15-21

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.

When the angels had left them and
gone into heaven, the shepherds
said to one another, "Let us go now
to Bethlehem and see this thing
that has taken place, which the Lord
has made known to us." So they
went with haste and found Mary
and Joseph, and the child lying in
the manger. When they saw this,
they made known what had been
told them about this child; and
all who heard it were amazed at
what the shepherds told them. But
Mary treasured all these words and
pondered them in her heart. The
shepherds returned, glorifying and
praising God for all they had heard
and seen, as it had been told them.
After eight days had passed, it was
time to circumcise the child; and he
was called Jesus, the name given by
the angel before he was conceived
in the womb.

POST COMMUNION

Heavenly Father,
whose blessed Son shared at
Nazareth the life of an earthly
home:
help your Church to live as one
family,
united in love and obedience,
and bring us all at last to our home
in heaven;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.