

## 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

**R** Show us your mercy, O Lord, and grant us your salvation.

You have been gracious to your land, O Lord, you have restored the good fortune of Jacob.

You have forgiven the iniquity of your people and blotted out all their sins. **R**

I will listen to what the Lord God is saying, for he is speaking peace to his faithful people and to those who turn their hearts to him.

Truly, his salvation is very near to those who fear him, that his glory may dwell in our land. **R**

Mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

Truth shall spring up from the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven. **R**

The Lord will indeed grant prosperity, and our land will yield its increase. Righteousness shall go before him, and peace shall be a pathway for his feet. **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.

## 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 [and we are glad indeed].*

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 shouts of joy. **R**

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

The Lord has done great things for us,  
 and we are glad indeed. **R**

Restore our fortunes, O Lord,  
 like the watercourses of the Negev.  
 Those who sowed with tears  
 will reap with songs of joy.  
 Those who go out weeping, carrying  
 the seed,  
 will come again with joy, shouldering  
 their sheaves. **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**

**R** *My spirit rejoices in God my Saviour.*

Or **Psalm 89:1-4. 19-26**

**R** *Your love, O Lord, for ever will I sing.*

Your love, O Lord, for ever will

I sing;

from age to age my mouth will proclaim  
 your faithfulness.

For I am persuaded that your love is  
 established for ever;

you have set your faithfulness firmly in  
 the heavens. **R**

"I have made a covenant with my  
 chosen one;

I have sworn an oath to David my  
 servant:

'I will establish your line for ever,

and preserve your throne for all  
 generations.'" **R**

You spoke once in a vision

and said to your faithful people:

"I have set the crown upon a warrior  
 and have exalted one chosen out of the  
 people.

I have found David my servant;

with my holy oil have I anointed him. **R**

My hand will hold him fast

and my arm will make him strong.

No enemy shall deceive him,

nor the wicked bring him down.

I will crush his foes before him  
 and strike down those who hate him. **R**

My faithfulness and love shall be with  
 him,

and he shall be victorious through my  
 name.

I shall make his dominion extend

from the Great Sea to the River.

He will say 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.

## 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** *All the ends of the earth have seen  
 the victory of our God.*

Sing to the Lord a new song,  
 for he has done marvellous things.  
 With his right hand and his holy arm  
 has he won for himself the victory. **R**

The Lord has made known his victory;  
 his righteousness has he openly  
 shown  
 in the sight of the nations.  
 He remembers his mercy and  
 faithfulness  
 to the house of Israel,  
 and all the ends of the earth have  
 seen  
 the victory of our God. **R**

Shout with joy to the Lord, all you  
 lands;  
 lift up your voice, rejoice and sing.  
 Sing to the Lord with the harp,  
 with the harp and the voice of song.  
 With trumpets and the sound of the  
 horn  
 shout with joy before the King, the  
 Lord. **R**

Let the sea make a noise and all that  
 is in it,  
 the lands and those who dwell  
 therein.  
 Let the rivers clap their hands,  
 and let the hills ring out with joy  
 before the Lord,  
 when 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

**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 angels of his;

praise him, all his host.  
Praise him, sun and moon;  
praise him, all you shining stars. **R**

Praise him, heaven of heavens,  
and you waters above the  
heavens.  
Let them praise the name of the  
Lord;  
for he commanded and they  
were created.  
He made them stand 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 fog,  
tempestuous wind, doing his will;  
Mountains and all hills,  
fruit trees and all cedars; **R**

Wild beasts and all cattle,  
creeping things and winged  
birds;  
Kings of the earth and all  
peoples,  
princes and all rulers of the  
world;  
Young men and maidens,  
old and young together. **R**

Let them praise the name of the  
Lord,  
for his name only is exalted,  
his splendour is over earth and  
heaven.  
He has raised up strength for his  
people  
and praise for all his loyal  
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.