

THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT
14th December 2008

First Reading

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah

I exult for joy in the Lord.

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 brokenhearted, 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. Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, foreigners shall till your land and dress your vines; but you shall be called priests of the Lord, you shall be named ministers of our God; you shall enjoy the wealth of the nations, and in their riches you shall glory. Because their shame was double, and dishonour was proclaimed as their lot, therefore they shall possess a double portion; everlasting joy shall be theirs.

Hear the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

For Responsorial Psalm

Response: *My soul rejoices in my God*

My soul glorifies the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour.
He looks on his servant in her nothingness;
henceforth all ages will call me blessed.

R.

The Almighty works marvels for me.
Holy is his name!
His mercy is from age to age,
on those who fear him.

R.

He fills the starving with good things,
sends the rich away empty
He protects Israel, his servant,
remembering his mercy.

R.

Isaiah 61:1-7

Second Reading

A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Thessalonians

*May you all be kept blameless, spirit, soul and body
for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

1 Thess. 5:16-24

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.

Hear the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia! Alleluia! The spirit of the Lord God is upon me,
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed. **Alleluia!**

GOSPEL

Jn. 1:6-8, 19-28

✠ A reading from the holy gospel according to John

℟: **Glory to you Lord Christ.**

There stands among you, unknown to you, the one who is coming after me.

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 baptising 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 baptising.

For the Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you Lord Christ.

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