

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 Zephaniah 3:14-end

A reading from the book of the prophet Zephaniah.

Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem! The LORD has taken away the judgements against you, he has turned away your enemies. The king of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; you shall fear disaster no more. On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands grow weak. The LORD, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing as on a day of festival. I will remove disaster from you, so that you will not bear reproach for it. I will deal with all your oppressors at that time. And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth. At that time I will bring you home, at the time when I gather you; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes, says the LORD.

CANTICLE OR PSALM

Either **Psalm 146:4-end**

R *The Lord shall reign for ever.*

Happy are those who have the God of Jacob for their help,
 whose hope is in the Lord their God;
 Who made heaven and earth,
 the sea and all that is in them;
 who keeps his promise for ever;
 Who gives justice to those that suffer wrong
 and bread to those who hunger. **R**

The Lord looses those that are bound;
 the Lord opens the eyes of the blind;
 The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down;
 the Lord loves the righteous; **R**

The Lord watches over the stranger in the land;
 he upholds the orphan and widow;
 but the way of the wicked he turns upside down.

The Lord shall reign for ever,
 your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. Alleluia. **R**

Or **Isaiah 12:2-end**

SECOND READING

Philippians 4:4-7

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Philippians.

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

GOSPEL Luke 3:7-18

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

John said to the crowds that came out to be baptised by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits worthy

of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire." And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise." Even tax-collectors came to be baptised, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what should we do?" He said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages." As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, "I baptise you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

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.



The Lord shall reign for ev - er.