

Readings for Sunday 17th December —Third Sunday of Advent

The 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. **Amen.**

(or)

God for whom we watch and wait,
you sent John the Baptist to prepare the way of
your Son: give us courage to speak the truth,
to hunger for justice,
and to suffer for the cause of right,
with Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

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 favor, 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.

This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Second Reading

1 Thessalonians 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.

This is the Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Gospel Reading

John 1:6-8, 19-28

*Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according
to John. **Glory to you, O Lord***

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.

This is the Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you O Christ

Post Communion Prayer

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. **Amen.**

Readings for Sunday 24th December—Fourth Sunday of Advent

The 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. **Amen.**

(or) **

Eternal God,
as Mary waited for the birth of your Son,
so we wait for his coming in glory;
bring us through the birth pangs of this present age
to see, with her, our great salvation
in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

Now when 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 thus 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 that the Lord will make you a house.

Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

This is the word of the Lord
Thanks be to God

Second Reading

Romans 16:25-end

Now 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 forever! Amen.

This is the Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Gospel Reading

Luke 1:26-38

*Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke. **Glory to you, O Lord***

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, favored 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 favor 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 forever, 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.

This is the Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you O Christ

Post Communion Prayer

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. **Amen.**