



December 24th

# Christmas: Night Mass

## OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray: God of power and mercy, open our hearts in welcome. Remove the things that hinder us from receiving Christ with joy, so that we may share his wisdom and become one with him when he comes in glory, for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit one God, for ever and ever.

## FIRST READING

(The Jews' coming home from the Babylonian exile is the background to this poetic and beautiful reading. God will prepare a highway to facilitate their return and bring about a great restoration.)

### A reading from the Book of Baruch (5:1-9)

Take off the garment of your sorrow and affliction, O Jerusalem, and put on for ever the beauty of the glory from God. Put on the robe of the righteousness from God; put on your head the diadem of the glory of the Everlasting. For God will show your splendour everywhere under heaven. For your name will for ever be called by God, "Peace of righteousness and glory of godliness." Arise, O Jerusalem, stand upon the height and look toward the east, and see your children gathered from west and east, at the word of the Holy One, rejoicing that God has remembered them. For they went forth from you on foot, led away by their enemies; but God will bring them back to you carried in glory, as on a royal throne. For God has ordered that every high mountain and the everlasting hills be made low and the valleys filled up, to make level ground, so that Israel may walk safely in the glory of God. The woods and every fragrant tree have shaded Israel at God's command. For God will lead Israel with joy, in the light of his glory, with the mercy and righteousness that come from him.

This is the Word of the Lord

## PSALM (125)

Response: What marvels the Lord worked for us! Indeed we were glad.

When the Lord delivered Zion from bondage, it seemed like a dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, on our lips there were songs. R./

The heathens themselves said: "What marvels the Lord worked for them! What marvels the Lord worked for us! Indeed we were glad. R./

Deliver us, O Lord, from our bondage as streams in dry land. Those who are sowing in tears will sing when they reap. R./

They go out, they go out, full of tears, carrying seed for the sowing; they come back, they come back, full of songs, carrying their sheaves. R./

## SECOND READING

(This passage is a wonderful threefold prayer for love, understanding and morality. St Paul urges the Christian community at Philippi to prepare themselves for the Second Coming of Christ by living a blameless and pure life.)

A reading from the Letter of St Paul to the Philippians (1:3-6,8-11)

Brethren, I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, thankful for your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. And I am sure that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruits of righteousness which come through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

This is the Word of the Lord

## ACCLAMATION (Lk 3:4,6)

Alleluia, alleluia! Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. All flesh shall see the salvation of God. Alleluia!

## GOSPEL

(St Luke introduces us to the Messiah and his herald, John the Baptist. In the manner of an OT prophet, John undertakes to prepare the people for the coming of the Saviour by calling them to repentance.)

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to St Luke (3:1-6)

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias Tetrarch of Abilene, in the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness; and he went into all the region about the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."

This is the Gospel of the Lord

