

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
you 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.