

**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;  
<sup>2</sup>to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor,  
 and the day of vengeance of our God;  
 to comfort all who mourn;  
<sup>3</sup>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.  
<sup>4</sup>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.

<sup>8</sup>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.  
<sup>9</sup>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.  
<sup>10</sup>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.  
<sup>11</sup>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.

**Psalm 126**

or Luke 1:46b-55

**SECOND READING: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24**

Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup>pray without ceasing, <sup>18</sup>give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. <sup>19</sup>Do not quench the Spirit. <sup>20</sup>Do not despise the words of prophets, <sup>21</sup>but test everything; hold fast to what is good; <sup>22</sup>abstain from every form of evil.

<sup>23</sup>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. <sup>24</sup>The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

**GOSPEL: John 1:6-8, 19-28**

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup>He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

<sup>19</sup>This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" <sup>20</sup>He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." <sup>21</sup>And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." <sup>22</sup>Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" <sup>23</sup>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.

<sup>24</sup>Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. <sup>25</sup>They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" <sup>26</sup>John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, <sup>27</sup>the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." <sup>28</sup>This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

**Next Sunday's Readings:** 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16; Luke 1:46b-55 or Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26; Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38.

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