

THE WORD OF THE LORD : TODAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

At the Liturgy at Nine Thirty

THE THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT

As the church anticipates celebrating the Incarnation, the readings for the day highlight eschatological themes – things concerned with the end of time, the last days. The effect is to recall that the birth of a particular baby is part of the culmination of God's will for the world. The texts have in common the healing of the sick as signs of the new order. Isaiah celebrates the transformation of the wilderness into a fertile land; the healing of the blind, the deaf, the lame, and the dumb; and the restoration of Zion. In the Gospel lection, John the Baptist is confirmed as the one who prepared the way for Jesus, and Jesus is confirmed as the Messiah through his healing of the sick and preaching of good news to the poor. The Magnificat praises God for acts of salvation, and the Epistle of James affirms that the coming of the Lord is at hand and counsels patience

COLLECT OF THE DAY

Presider: God of power and mercy, you call us once again to celebrate the coming of your Son. Remove those things which hinder love of you, that when he comes, he may find us waiting in awe and wonder for him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

People: Amen.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 35.1-10

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God. Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you." Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt

of jackals shall become a swamp, the grass shall become reeds and rushes. A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveller, not even fools shall go astray. No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

The word of the Lord

R/. Thanks be to God

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: 146.4-9



Come, O Lord, and save us.

Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help! whose hope is in the Lord their God; who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them; who keeps his promise for ever; *R/*.

Who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and food to those who hunger. The Lord sets the prisoners free; the Lord opens the eyes of the blind; the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; *R/*.

The Lord loves the righteous; the Lord cares for the stranger; he sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates the way of the wicked. The Lord shall reign for ever, your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. Hallelujah! *R/*.

SECOND READING: James 5.7-10

Be patient, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. Beloved,

do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

The word of the Lord
R/. Thanks be to God

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: Isaiah 61.1

Alleluia. Alleluia. The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good tidings to the afflicted. Alleluia.

GOSPEL: Matthew 11.2-11

R/. Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ

When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me." As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one of whom it is written, 'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.' Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

The Gospel of Christ
R/. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS

Presider: God of hope, renew in us the joy of your salvation and make us a living sacrifice to you, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

People: Amen

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Presider: Merciful God, may this eucharist free us from our sins, fill us with unending joy, and prepare us for the birthday of our Saviour. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, who is Lord now and for ever

People: Amen



The Holy Prophet Isaiah
16th Century Icon
Novgorod, Russia