

## 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.

## 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.