

Sunday between 11 and 17 December

Third Sunday of Advent (Year C)

First Reading - Zephaniah 3.14-20

A reading from the book of the prophet Zephaniah.

Sing aloud, O Zion!

Rejoice with all your heart, O Jerusalem!

For the Lord has
taken away
the judgements
made against you.

The Lord has
turned away
your enemies.

No more harm
will come to you.

Stay strong,
and do not fear;
for the Lord your God
is with you
as a mighty saviour.

The Lord says, 'I will delight in you,
and sing, and rejoice.

I will hold you
in my constant love.

I will free you
from all
your oppressors.

I will rescue the lame,
and gather in
all who were driven away.

I will gather you together
and bring you home.

And instead of shame,
you will have praise,
and honour,
in all the earth.'

This is the word of the Lord.

Second Reading - Philippians 4.4-7

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Philippians.

Rejoice in the Lord - always!

I say again, rejoice!

And let your
gracious gentleness
be known to everyone.

The Lord is near,
so do not worry
about anything.

But in everything, with prayer,
and thanksgiving,

let your requests
be made known
to God.

And the peace of God,
which surpasses
all understanding,

will protect
your hearts
and your minds
in Christ Jesus.

This is the word of the Lord.

Gospel - Luke 3.7-18

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Luke.

When the crowds
came to the Jordan
to be baptised by John,
John addressed them,
saying: 'You brood of vipers!

Who warned you
to flee
from the judgement
that is coming?

Bear fruit
that is worthy
of repentance!

And do not begin to say,
"but we have Abraham as our father",
for I tell you,
God could turn these stones
into children of Abraham!

The axe is ready,
and any tree
that does not bear good fruit
will be cut down
and thrown into the fire!

The crowds asked John,
'What should we do?'

He said to them, 'Whoever has
two coats
must share
with whoever has none.

And whoever has food
must do likewise.'

Tax collectors came to be baptised,
and they asked him, 'Teacher,
what should we do?'

He said to them, 'Collect only
what you have been ordered to collect.'

Soldiers also asked him, 'And what should we do?'

He said to them, 'Do not extort money
using threats, and false accusations,
but be content with what you are paid.'

The people were filled with expectation,
wondering
whether John might even be the Messiah.

John answered them, saying,

'I baptise you
with water,
but after me
comes another who is
more powerful;
and I am not worthy
even to be his servant.

He will baptise you
with the Holy Spirit, and with fire,
and he will separate
the wheat from the chaff.'

With these, and many other
words and challenges,
John proclaimed the good news
to the people.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.