

FIRST READING: Zephaniah 3:14-20

Sing aloud, O daughter Zion;
shout, O Israel!

Rejoice and exult with all your heart,
O daughter Jerusalem!

¹⁵The LORD has taken away the judgments
against you,
he has turned away your enemies.

The king of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst;
you shall fear disaster no more.

¹⁶On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:
Do not fear, O Zion;
do not let your hands grow weak.

¹⁷The 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
¹⁸as on a day of festival.

I will remove disaster from you,
so that you will not bear reproach for it.

¹⁹I 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.

²⁰At 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.

Psalmody: Isaiah 12:2-6**SECOND READING: Philippians 4:4-7**

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say,
Rejoice. ⁵Let your gentleness be known to
everyone. The Lord is near. ⁶Do not worry
about anything, but in everything by prayer and

supplication with thanksgiving let your requests
be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God,
which surpasses all understanding, will guard
your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

GOSPEL: Luke 3:7-18

John said to the crowds that came out to be bap-
tized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned
you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸Bear 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. ⁹Even now the ax
is lying at the root of the trees; every tree there-
fore that does not bear good fruit is cut down
and thrown into the fire."

¹⁰And the crowds asked him, "What then
should we do?" ¹¹In reply he said to them,
"Whoever has two coats must share with any-
one who has none; and whoever has food must
do likewise." ¹²Even tax collectors came to be
baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what
should we do?" ¹³He said to them, "Collect no
more than the amount prescribed for you."
¹⁴Soldiers 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."

¹⁵As the people were filled with expectation,
and all were questioning in their hearts con-
cerning John, whether he might be the Messiah,
¹⁶John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize
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 baptize you with
the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷His 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."

¹⁸So, with many other exhortations, he pro-
claimed the good news to the people.

Next Sunday's Readings: Micah 5:2-5a; Luke 1:46b-55 or Psalm 80:1-7; Hebrews 10:5-10; Luke 1:39-45 [46-55].

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