

## 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.