

Alleluia, alleluia!

Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths: all people shall see the salvation of God. Alleluia!

## GOSPEL

Lk 3:1-6

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

*All people shall see the salvation of God.*

In the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar's reign, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judaea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of the lands of Ituraea and Trachonitis, Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, during the pontificate of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah, in the wilderness. He went through the whole Jordan district proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the sayings of the prophet Isaiah:

A voice cries in the wilderness:

Prepare a way for the Lord,  
make his paths straight.

Every valley will be filled in,  
every mountain and hill be laid low,  
winding ways will be straightened  
and rough roads made smooth.

And all mankind shall see the salvation of  
God.

■ The Gospel of the Lord.

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# Breaking Open the Word



# THE SAVING WORD

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT / C

05 DECEMBER 2021

## TRUST IN GOD'S HELP

As we prepare for the Lord's return, today's readings encourage us to continue the journey we have started but challenge us as well. Baruch gave heart to the generation of the exile by speaking about the highway that God was building for their return. At the dawn of the time of the Messiah, John the Baptist makes use of the same image but reminds us that the highway that is being built in the desert is not only God's work but ours. Our co-operation is needed as the rough places of our hearts are smoothed, the mountains we force God to cross are made level, and the valleys filled in.

Paul calls the Christians of Philippi to take heart as they wait for the Lord's return. Paul was devoted to all Christian communities he had founded and ministered to, but the Philippians had a special place in his heart, and he called them his jewel and crown (cf. Philippians 4:1). They were a Macedonian community that had suffered much (cf. 2 Corinthians 8:1-3) and yet supported him greatly in his ministry emotionally, financially, and spiritually (Philippians 4: 14-16).

We see the encouragement that Paul gives them as they prepare for the Lord's return. He knows that it is not always easy to discern what is good and necessary but he reassures the Philippians by reminding them that the Lord who started the good work in them will bring it to completion.



Christopher Monaghan CP

## FIRST READING

Bar 5:1-9

A reading from the prophet Baruch.

*Jerusalem – God will show you splendour.*

Jerusalem, take off your dress of sorrow and distress,  
put on the beauty of the glory of God for ever,  
wrap the cloak of the integrity of God around you,  
put the diadem of the glory of the Eternal on your head:  
since God means to show your splendour to every nation under heaven,  
since the name God gives you for ever will be,  
'Peace through integrity, and honour through devotedness.'

Arise, Jerusalem, stand on the heights

and turn your eyes to the east:

see your sons reassembled from west and east  
at the command of the Holy One, jubilant  
that God has remembered them.

Though they left you on foot,

with enemies for an escort,

now God brings them back to you

like royal princes carried back in glory.

For God has decreed the flattening  
of each high mountain, of the everlasting hills,  
the filling of the valleys to make the ground level

so that Israel can walk in safety under the  
glory of God.

And the forests and every fragrant tree will  
provide shade

for Israel at the command of God;

for God will guide Israel in joy by the light of  
his glory

with his mercy and integrity for escort.

■ The word of the Lord.

## RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps 125. R. v. 3

**R.** The Lord has done great things for us;  
we are filled with joy.

1. When the Lord delivered Zion from  
bondage, / it seemed like a dream. / Then was  
our mouth filled with laughter, / on our lips  
there were songs. **R.**

2. The heathens themselves said: 'What  
 marvels / the Lord worked for them!' / What  
 marvels the Lord worked for us! / Indeed we  
 were glad. **R.**

3. Deliver us, O Lord, from our bondage / as  
 streams in dry land. / Those who are sowing in  
 tears / will sing when they reap. **R.**

4. They go out, they go out, full of tears /  
 carrying seed for the sowing: / they come back,  
 they come back, full of song, / carrying their  
 sheaves. **R.**

## SECOND READING

Phil 1:3-6, 8-11

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the  
Philippians.

*Show yourselves sinless and without blame in the  
day of Christ.*

Every time I pray for all of you, I pray with joy,  
remembering how you have helped to spread  
the Good News from the day you first heard  
it right up to the present. I am quite certain  
that the One who began this good work in  
you will see that it is finished when the Day  
of Christ Jesus comes. God knows how much  
I miss you all, loving you as Christ Jesus loves  
you. My prayer is that your love for each other  
may increase more and more and never stop  
improving your knowledge and deepening your  
perception so that you can always recognise  
what is best. This will help you to become  
pure and blameless, and prepare you for the  
Day of Christ, when you will reach the perfect  
goodness which Jesus Christ produces in us for  
the glory and praise of God.

■ The word of the Lord.