**FIRST READING: Isaiah 61: 1-4, 8-11**

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah

The Sovereign Lord has filled me with his Spirit. He has chosen me and sent me; To bring good news to the poor, To heal the broken-hearted, To announce release to captives And freedom to those in prison. He has sent me to proclaim That the time has come When the Lord will save his people And defeat their enemies. He has sent me to comfort all who mourn, To give to those who mourn in Zion Joy and gladness instead of grief, A song of praise instead of sorrow. They will be like trees That the Lord himself has planted. They will all do what is right, And God will be praised for what he has done. They will rebuild cities that have long been in ruins. The Lord says, “I love justice and I hate oppression and crime. I will faithfully reward my people And make an eternal covenant with them. They will be famous among the nations; Everyone who sees them will know That they are a people whom I have blessed.” Jerusalem rejoices because of what the Lord has done. She is like a bride dressed for her wedding. God has clothed her with salvation and victory. As surely as seeds sprout and grow, The Sovereign Lord will save his people, And all the nations will praise him.

**Psalm 126**

**R** **The Lord has done great things for us**

When the Lord brought us back to Jerusalem, it was like a dream! How we laughed, how we sang for joy! Then the other nations said about us, “The Lord did great things for them.” **R**

Indeed he did great things for us; how happy we were! Lord, make us prosperous again, just as the rain brings water back to dry riverbeds. **R**

Let those who wept as they planted their crops, gather the harvest with joy! Those who wept as they went out carrying the seed will come back singing for joy, as they bring in the harvest. **R**

**Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5: 16-24**

A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Thessalonians

Be joyful always, pray at all times, be thankful in all circumstances. This is what God wants from you in your life in union with Christ Jesus. Do not restrain the Holy Spirit; do not despise inspired messages. Put all things to the test: keep what is good and avoid every kind of evil. May the God who gives us peace make you holy in every way and keep your whole being—spirit, soul, and body—free from every fault at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you will do it, because he is faithful..

**GOSPEL: John 1: 6-8,19-28**

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

**Glory to you O Lord.**

6 God sent his messenger, a man named John, who came to tell people about the light, so that all should hear the message and believe. He himself was not the light; he came to tell about the light. The Jewish authorities in Jerusalem sent some priests and Levites to John to ask him, “Who are you?” John did not refuse to answer, but spoke out openly and clearly, saying: “I am not the Messiah.” “Who are you, then?” they asked. “Are you Elijah?” “No, I am not,” John answered. “Are you the Prophet?” they asked. “No,” he replied. “Then tell us who you are,” they said. “We have to take an answer back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?” John answered by quoting the prophet Isaiah: “I am ‘the voice of someone shouting in the desert: Make a straight path for the Lord to travel!’” The messengers, who had been sent by the Pharisees, then asked John, “If you are not the Messiah nor Elijah nor the Prophet, why do you baptize?” John answered, “I baptize with water, but among you stands the one you do not know. He is coming after me, but I am not good enough even to untie his sandals.” All this happened in Bethany on the east side of the Jordan River, where John was baptizing.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**