

# SUNDAY READINGS & PRAYERS

## NATIVITY OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST

### COLLECT

Almighty God, by whose providence your servant John the Baptist was wonderfully born, and sent to prepare the way of your Son our Saviour by the preaching of repentance: lead us to repent according to his preaching and, after his example, constantly to speak the truth, boldly to rebuke vice, and patiently to suffer for the truth's sake; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

### FIRST READING

*Isa 40.1–11*

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

A voice says, "Cry!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of the Lord blows on it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand for ever.

Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good news; lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!" Behold, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for

him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

### RESPONSORIAL PSALM

*from Ps 85*



℣. The dawn from on high shall break upon us. (*All repeat*)



I will hear what the Lord | God is saying, for he is speaking peace to his | faithful people.

His salvation is near for | those who fear him, that his glory may dwell | in our land. ℣.

Mercy and truth have | met together; righteousness and peace have | kissed each other.

Truth shall spring up | from the earth and righteousness look | down from heaven. ℣.

The Lord will indeed | grant prosperity and our land shall | yield its increase. Righteousness shall | go before him and peace shall follow | in his steps. ℣.

[Alternatively, Benedictus (see Year C, Advent 2), with same response and chant. Strongly preferable in Year B to avoid having the same psalm twice in close succession.]

### SECOND READING

*Gal 3.23–29*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Galatians.

Before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God,

through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

This is the Word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

*Lk 1.76*

*Alleluia.*

You, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High:  
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways.

*Alleluia.*

GOSPEL READING

*Lk 1.57–66,80*

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

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

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. And her neighbours and relatives heard that the Lord had shown great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her. And on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child. And they would have called him Zechariah after his father, but his mother answered, "No; he shall be called John." And they said to her, "None of your relatives is called by this name." And they made signs to his father, enquiring what he wanted him to be called. And he asked for a writing tablet and wrote, "His name is John." And they all wondered. And immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, blessing God. And fear came on all their neighbours. And all these things were talked about through all the hill country of Judea, and all who heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, "What then will this child be?" For the hand of the Lord was with him.

And the child grew and became strong in

spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day of his public appearance to Israel.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

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PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

God of our salvation, as we honour your servant John the Baptist, accept the offerings we bring before you and free us to worship you without fear in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life; through Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

POST-COMMUNION

Merciful Lord, whose prophet John the Baptist proclaimed your Son as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world: grant that we who in this sacrament have known your forgiveness and your life-giving love may ever tell of your mercy and your peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

SOLEMN BLESSING

John's birth was foretold by the angel of God; may you ever give thanks to the Lord, who has visited and redeemed his people.  
**Amen.**

John leapt for joy in the womb at the presence of Christ; may you rejoice at the mighty salvation God has raised up for us in the house of his servant David. **Amen.**

John grew and became strong in the Spirit; may you serve the Lord without fear, in holiness and righteousness all the days of your life. **Amen.**

And the blessing ...