

FIRST READING: Malachi 3:1-4 The day of judgment is near (NKJV)

¹ “Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight. Behold, He is coming,” says the LORD of hosts. ² “But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He *is* like a refiner’s fire and like launderers’ soap. ³ He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer to the LORD an offering in righteousness. ⁴ “Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasant to the LORD, as in the days of old, as in former years.

PSALM: Luke 1:68-79 (NRSV)

⁶⁸ ‘Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He has looked favourably on His people and redeemed them. ⁶⁹ He has raised up a mighty saviour for us in the house of his servant David, ⁷⁰ as He spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, ⁷¹ that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us. ⁷² Thus He has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors, and has remembered His holy covenant, ⁷³ the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham, to grant us ⁷⁴ that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies, might serve Him without fear, ⁷⁵ in holiness and righteousness before Him all our days. ⁷⁶ And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare His ways, ⁷⁷ to give knowledge of salvation to His people by the forgiveness of their sins. ⁷⁸ By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, ⁷⁹ to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.’

SECOND READING: Philippians 1:3-11 Be ready for the day of Christ
(CEB)

³ I thank my God every time I mention you in my prayers. ⁴ I'm thankful for all of you every time I pray, and it's always a prayer full of joy. ⁵ I'm glad because of the way you have been my partners in the ministry of the gospel from the time you first believed it until now. ⁶ I'm sure about this: the One who started a good work in you will stay with you to complete the job by the day of Christ Jesus. ⁷ I have good reason to think this way about all of you because I keep you in my heart. You are all my partners in God's grace, both during my time in prison and in the defence and support of the gospel. ⁸ God is my witness that I feel affection for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. ⁹ This is my prayer: that your love might become even more and more rich with knowledge and all kinds of insight. ¹⁰ I pray this so that you will be able to decide what really matters and so you will be sincere and blameless on the day of Christ. ¹¹ I pray that you will then be filled with the fruit of righteousness, which comes from Jesus Christ, in order to give glory and praise to God.

GOSPEL: Luke 3:1-6 All people will see the salvation of our God (NRSV)

¹ In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, ² during the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. ³ He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, ⁴ as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, 'The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make His paths straight. ⁵ Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; ⁶ and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'"