

## **THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT, 11<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

**First Reading: Isaiah 35:1-10** God himself will come to save us (NIVUK)

<sup>35</sup> The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom. Like the crocus, <sup>2</sup> it will burst into bloom; it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy. The glory of Lebanon will be given to it, the splendour of Carmel and Sharon; they will see the glory of the LORD, the splendour of our God. <sup>3</sup> Strengthen the feeble hands, steady the knees that give way; <sup>4</sup> say to those with fearful hearts, 'Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you.' <sup>5</sup> Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. <sup>6</sup> Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert. <sup>7</sup> The burning sand will become a pool, the thirsty ground bubbling springs. In the haunts where jackals once lay, grass and reeds and papyrus will grow. <sup>8</sup> And a highway will be there; it will be called the Way of Holiness; it will be for those who walk on that Way. The unclean will not journey on it; wicked fools will not go about on it. <sup>9</sup> No lion will be there, nor any ravenous beast; they will not be found there. But only the redeemed will walk there, <sup>10</sup> and those the LORD has rescued will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

**Psalms 146:5-10**

<sup>5</sup> Blessed are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD their God. <sup>6</sup> He is the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them – he remains faithful for ever. <sup>7</sup> He upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets prisoners free, <sup>8</sup> the LORD gives sight to the blind, the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down, the LORD loves the righteous. <sup>9</sup> The LORD watches over the foreigner and sustains the fatherless and the widow, but he frustrates the ways of the wicked. <sup>10</sup> The LORD reigns for ever, your God, O Zion, for all generations. Praise the LORD.

**SECOND READING: James 5:7-10** Do not lose heart (NIVUK)

<sup>7</sup> Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains. <sup>8</sup> You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. <sup>9</sup> Don't grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door! <sup>10</sup> Brothers and sisters, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

**GOSPEL: Matthew 11:2-11** Jesus and John the Baptist (NIVUK)

<sup>2</sup> When John, who was in prison, heard about the deeds of the Messiah, he sent his disciples <sup>3</sup> to ask him, 'Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?' <sup>4</sup> Jesus replied, 'Go back and report to John what you hear and see: <sup>5</sup> the blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy<sup>[a]</sup> are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. <sup>6</sup> Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me.' <sup>7</sup> As John's disciples were leaving, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: 'What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swayed by the wind? <sup>8</sup> If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear fine clothes are in kings' palaces. <sup>9</sup> Then what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. <sup>10</sup> This is the one about whom it is written: "'I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you."<sup>[b]</sup> <sup>11</sup> Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet whoever is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.