**FIRST READING: Isaiah 40: 1-11**

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah

“Comfort my people,” says our God. “Comfort them! Encourage the people of Jerusalem. Tell them they have suffered long enough and their sins are now forgiven. have punished them in full for all their sins.” A voice cries out,

“Prepare in the wilderness a road for the Lord! Clear the way in the desert for our God. Fill every valley; level every mountain. The hills will become a plain, and the rough country will be made smooth. Then the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all people will see it. The Lord himself has promised this.” A voice cries out, “Proclaim a message!” “What message shall I proclaim?” I ask. “Proclaim that all human beings are like grass; they last no longer than wild flowers. Grass withers and flowers fade when the Lord sends the wind blowing over them. People are no more enduring than grass. Yes, grass withers and flowers fade, but the word of our God endures forever.” Jerusalem, go up on a high mountain and proclaim the good news!

Call out with a loud voice, Zion; announce the good news! Speak out and do not be afraid. Tell the towns of Judah that their God is coming! The Sovereign Lord is coming to rule with power, bringing with him the people he has rescued. He will take care of his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs together and carry them in his arms; he will gently lead their mothers.

**Psalm 85: 1-2,8-13**

Lord, you have been merciful to your land; you have made Israel prosperous again. You have forgiven your people's sins and pardoned all their wrongs. I am listening to what the Lord God is saying; he promises peace to us, his own people, if we do not go back to our foolish ways. Surely he is ready to save those who honour him, and his saving presence will remain in our land. Love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will embrace. Human loyalty will reach up from the earth, and God's righteousness will look down from heaven. The Lord will make us prosperous, and our land will produce rich harvests. Righteousness will go before the Lord and prepare the path for him.

**Second Reading: 2 Peter 3: 8-15a**

A reading from the second letter of Peter

But do not forget one thing, my dear friends! There is no difference in the Lord's sight between one day and a thousand years; to him the two are the same. The Lord is not slow to do what he has promised, as some think. Instead, he is patient with you, because he does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants all to turn away from their sins. But the Day of the Lord will come like a thief. On that Day the heavens will disappear with a shrill noise, the heavenly bodies will burn up and be destroyed, and the earth with everything in it will vanish. Since all these things will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people should you be? Your lives should be holy and dedicated to God, as you wait for the Day of God and do your best to make it come soon—the Day when the heavens will burn up and be destroyed, and the heavenly bodies will be melted by the heat. But we wait for what God has promised: new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness will be at home. And so, my friends, as you wait for that Day, do your best to be pure and faultless in God's sight and to be at peace with him. Look on our Lord's patience as the opportunity he is giving you to be saved, just as our dear friend Paul wrote to you, using the wisdom that God gave him.

**GOSPEL: Mark 1: 1-8**

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark

**Glory to you O Lord.**

This is the Good News about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It began as the prophet Isaiah had written: “God said, ‘I will send my messenger ahead of you to open the way for you.’ Someone is shouting in the desert, ‘Get the road ready for the Lord; make a straight path for him to travel!’” So John appeared in the desert, baptizing and preaching. “Turn away from your sins and be baptized,” he told the people, “and God will forgive your sins.” Many people from the province of Judea and the city of Jerusalem went out to hear John. They confessed their sins, and he baptized them in the Jordan River. John wore clothes made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. He announced to the people, “The man who will come after me is much greater than I am. I am not good enough even to bend down and untie his sandals. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**