**FIRST READING: Amos 7: 7-15**

A reading from the book of the prophet Amos

I had another vision from the Lord. In it I saw him standing beside a wall that had been built with the use of a plumb line, and there was a plumb line in his hand. He asked me, “Amos, what do you see?” “A plumb line,” I answered. Then he said, “I am using it to show that my people are like a wall that is out of line. I will not change my mind again about punishing them. The places where Isaac's descendants worship will be destroyed. The holy places of Israel will be left in ruins. I will bring the dynasty of King Jeroboam to an end.” Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, then sent a report to King Jeroboam of Israel: “Amos is plotting against you among the people. His speeches will destroy the country. This is what he says: ‘Jeroboam will die in battle, and the people of Israel will be taken away from their land into exile.’” Amaziah then said to Amos, “That's enough, prophet! Go on back to Judah and do your preaching there. Let them pay you for it. Don't prophesy here at Bethel any more. This is the king's place of worship, the national temple.” Amos answered, “I am not the kind of prophet who prophesies for pay. I am a herdsman, and I take care of fig trees. But the Lord took me from my work as a shepherd and ordered me to come and prophesy to his people Israel.

**Psalm 85: 8-13**

**R Show us your mercy, O Lord, and grant us your salvation.**

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. **R**

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. **R**

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. .**R**

**Second Reading: Ephesians 1: 3-14**

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Ephesians

Let us give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! For in our union with Christ he has blessed us by giving us every spiritual blessing in the heavenly world. Even before the world was made, God had already chosen us to be his through our union with Christ, so that we would be holy and without fault before him. Because of his love God had already decided that through Jesus Christ he would make us his children—this was his pleasure and purpose. Let us praise God for his glorious grace, for the free gift he gave us in his dear Son! For by the blood of Christ[c] we are set free, that is, our sins are forgiven. How great is the grace of God, which he gave to us in such large measure! In all his wisdom and insight God did what he had purposed, and made known to us the secret plan he had already decided to complete by means of Christ. This plan, which God will complete when the time is right, is to bring all creation together, everything in heaven and on earth, with Christ as head. All things are done according to God's plan and decision; and God chose us to be his own people in union with Christ because of his own purpose, based on what he had decided from the very beginning. Let us, then, who were the first to hope in Christ, praise God's glory! And you also became God's people when you heard the true message, the Good News that brought you salvation. You believed in Christ, and God put his stamp of ownership on you by giving you the Holy Spirit he had promised. The Spirit is the guarantee that we shall receive what God has promised his people, and this assures us that God will give complete freedom to those who are his. Let us praise his glory!

**GOSPEL: Mark 6: 14-29**

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark

**Glory to you O Lord.**

Now King Herod heard about all this, because Jesus' reputation had spread everywhere. Some people were saying, “John the Baptist has come back to life! That is why he has this power to perform miracles.” Others, however, said, “He is Elijah.” Others said, “He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of long ago.” When Herod heard it, he said, “He is John the Baptist! I had his head cut off, but he has come back to life!” Herod himself had ordered John's arrest and he had him tied up and put in prison. Herod did this because of Herodias, whom he had married, even though she was the wife of his brother Philip. John the Baptist kept telling Herod, “It isn't right for you to marry your brother's wife!” So Herodias held a grudge against John and wanted to kill him, but she could not because of Herod. Herod was afraid of John because he knew that John was a good and holy man, and so he kept him safe. He liked to listen to him, even though he became greatly disturbed every time he heard him. Finally, Herodias got her chance. It was on Herod's birthday, when he gave a feast for all the top government officials, the military chiefs, and the leading citizens of Galilee. The daughter of Herodias came in and danced, and pleased Herod and his guests. So the king said to the girl, “What would you like to have? I will give you anything you want.” With many vows he said to her, “I swear that I will give you anything you ask for, even as much as half my kingdom!” So the girl went out and asked her mother, “What shall I ask for?” “The head of John the Baptist,” she answered. The girl hurried back at once to the king and demanded, “I want you to give me here and now the head of John the Baptist on a plate!” This made the king very sad, but he could not refuse her because of the vows he had made in front of all his guests. So he sent off a guard at once with orders to bring John's head. The guard left, went to the prison, and cut John's head off; then he brought it on a plate and gave it to the girl, who gave it to her mother. When John's disciples heard about this, they came and got his body, and buried it.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**