

First Reading*Jeremiah 23:5-8*

⁵Listen, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, who will reign wisely as king and establish justice and righteousness on earth.

⁶In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will dwell securely.

This is his name by which he will be called:
The LORD Our Righteousness.

⁷So, mark my words, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when it will no longer be said, “As surely as the LORD lives who brought the Israelites up out of Egypt,” ⁸but, “as surely as the LORD lives who brought up the descendants of the house of Israel and led them out of a land in the north and from all the countries where I had driven them.” Then they will dwell in their own land.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Second Reading*Romans 13:8-14*

⁸Do not owe anyone anything except to love one another, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. ⁹For the commandments—do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not covet (and if there is any other commandment)—are summed up in this statement: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” ¹⁰Love does no harm to a neighbor, so love is the fulfillment of the law.

¹¹And do this since you understand the present time. It is already the hour for you to wake up from sleep, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. ¹²The night is almost over, and the day is drawing near. So let us put away the deeds of darkness and put on the weapons of light. ¹³Let us walk decently as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual sin and wild living, not in strife and jealousy. ¹⁴Instead, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not give any thought to satisfying the desires of your sinful flesh.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Holy Gospel*Luke 1:5-25*

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the first chapter.

C **Glory to You, O Lord.**

⁵In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a certain priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah. His wife was from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. ⁶They were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and righteous decrees of the Lord. ⁷They did not have a child because Elizabeth was unable to bear children, and they were both well along in years. ⁸On one occasion, while Zechariah was serving as priest before God and his division was on duty, ⁹he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense. ¹⁰The whole crowd of people were praying outside the temple during the hour of the incense offering.

¹¹An angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. ¹²When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and overcome by fear. ¹³But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, because your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear a son for you, and you are to name him John. ¹⁴You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, ¹⁵because he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to drink wine or beer. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb. ¹⁶He will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God. ¹⁷He will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, to turn the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to prepare a people who are ready for the Lord.”

¹⁸Zechariah said to the angel, “How can I be sure of this, because I am an old man, and my wife is well along in years?”

¹⁹The angel answered him, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God and was sent to speak to you in order to tell you this good news. ²⁰Now listen, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day when these things happen, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled at the proper time.”

²¹Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah and wondering what was taking him so long in the temple. ²²When he did come out, he was unable to speak to them. Then they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple. He kept making signs to them and remained unable to speak.

²³When the days of his priestly service were completed, he went back to his home.

²⁴After those days his wife Elizabeth conceived. She kept herself in seclusion for five months, saying, ²⁵“The Lord has done this for me in the days when he looked with favor on me and took away my disgrace among the people.”

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise to You, O Christ.**