



COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION
SUNDAY 7 DECEMBER 2025 – Advent 2

COLLECT

O Lord, raise up, we pray, your power
and come among us,
and with great might succour us;
that whereas, through our sins and wickedness
we are grievously hindered
in running the race that is set before us,
your bountiful grace and mercy
may speedily help and deliver us;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
to whom with you and the Holy Spirit,
be honour and glory, now and for ever.

Psalms 72. 1-7, 18-19

1 Give the king your judgements, O God, ♦
and your righteousness to the son of a king.
2 Then shall he judge your people righteously ♦
and your poor with justice.
3 May the mountains bring forth peace, ♦
and the little hills righteousness for the people.
4 May he defend the poor among the people, ♦
deliver the children of the needy and crush the oppressor.
5 May he live as long as the sun and moon endure, ♦
from one generation to another.
6 May he come down like rain upon the mown grass, ♦
like the showers that water the earth.
7 In his time shall righteousness flourish, ♦
and abundance of peace
till the moon shall be no more.
18 Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, ♦
who alone does wonderful things.
19 And blessed be his glorious name for ever. ♦
May all the earth be filled with his glory.
Amen. Amen.

A reading from the letter to the Romans, chapter 15, verses 4-13.

For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written,

'Therefore I will confess you among the Gentiles,
and sing praises to your name';

and again he says,

'Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people';

and again,

'Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles,
and let all the peoples praise him';

and again Isaiah says,

'The root of Jesse shall come,
the one who rises to rule the Gentiles;
in him the Gentiles shall hope.'

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

At Morning Prayer, the Gospel is simply the second reading, people sit to hear it and is introduced in the same way as the first:

The second reading is from Matthew, chapter 3, verses 1-12.

and then at the end:

For the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

For Eucharists/ Communion people stand to hear the Gospel. Everywhere except Fitz introduces it with an Acclamation (the blue bit), and then we all use the introduction and ending (the green bit):

Alleluia. **Alleluia.**

Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,
and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

Alleluia.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Matthew, chapter 3, verses 1-12.

Glory to you, O Lord

And then at the end:

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.' This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, 'The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." '

Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit worthy of repentance. Do not presume to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our ancestor"; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

'I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing-floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.'

A Reflection from Hannah

Hope, joy, peace. Are those what we feel today, or have we been cast out into the wilderness, in our camel hair and with a diet of locusts?! Sometimes, with the narrative of the decline of faith in our culture (in spite of recent evidence to the contrary), it can feel a bit that way. In John the Baptist we have an ally and an example!

The Gospel was not born out of a majority understanding, nor did it align easily with established religious authorities. The brilliantly colourful description of John the Baptist has him doggedly pointed to Christ from the very margins of society, fearlessly proclaiming the good news. Good news, change, paradigm shifts nearly always come from the edges of our life together (not the established centre), enabling our Christian hope to remain unchanged in a changing world... or in the desert. As the reading from Romans so clearly affirms, God is God of everyone and everything- God's action is wider than the Church, wider than any label we may place upon ourselves or others- it is wild and free and the resurrection life springs up in unexpected corners, beyond the edges of what we thought possible.

So, whilst we may very well be in the wilderness, it doesn't need to send us to a place of anxiety, bunkering down and clinging on to the institutions we know and love. As generations before us have discovered time and again, the Church is a dynamic body- it waxes and wanes, undergoes revolutions and revivals, it makes enormous, lamentable mistakes- but God is bigger. There are times, and there may be times again, when that precious notion of 'tradition' is broken to pieces, and from the ashes.... or perhaps we might say from the wilderness... disciples rise again, the Church revives and reforms, and that pattern of death and resurrection, again and again, which is the way of the cross, is repeated.

That knowledge should give us hope, peace and (yes) joy as we look around at the Spiritual landscape of our time- a place full of deep questions. It's also a place full of potential- a sense of 'something more' is very common- and I've said this many times before, but our role is not to introduce people to Christ- how arrogant is that language?! No, it's often simply to notice the work of God in someone's life and to name it as eternal love- because we don't drag God around with us to as yet undiscovered places- we watch and we wait (both Advent words there) for the signs of God's love. In other words, the Spiritual landscape is full of questions and potential, but it is also already full of the unfolding life of Christ- beyond any boundaries we might set up.

So as we continue our Advent journey, let's watch and wait, and let's make St Paul's prayer for the fledgling Roman Church our prayer for one another too- because there is nothing to fear, we are people of hope:

'May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.'

May hope abound.