

# THE CATHOLIC PARISHES OF *St Thomas More* and *St Joseph the Worker*

*working in partnership with the Catholic Chaplaincy of Warwick University*

**St Thomas More**

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*both parishes are part of the Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham Reg Charity No 234216*

8<sup>th</sup> December 2024

## SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Psalter Week: 2  
Weekday Cycle: Year 1  
Sunday Year: C

<b>Saturday 7<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT</b>	<b>4.15pm</b>	STM	<b>Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Confessions</b>		
<b>Sunday 8<sup>th</sup></b>		<b>5.00pm</b>	STM	<b>Vigil Mass</b>	<b>Michael Browne (Anniv)</b>	
		<b>9.00am</b>	STM	<b>Mass</b>	<b>John Paul Brogan (Anniv)</b>	
		<b>11.00am</b>	SJW	<b>Mass</b>	<b>Saguez and Grimshaw families (Ints)</b>	
		<b>12.45pm</b>	SJW	<b>Mass (University)</b>	<b>Private Intention (DA)</b>	
Monday 9 <sup>th</sup>	Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of Blessed Virgin Mary	6.40pm	STM	Rosary for Peace in the World		
		7.00pm	STM	Mass	followed by a <b>Candlelight Procession to the Shrine</b>	
Tuesday 10 <sup>th</sup>	Advent Feria	7.00am	STM	<b>Rorate Mass</b>	Catherine Brooks (RIP)	
		10.00am	SJW	<b>Mass</b>	In Thanksgiving (JC)	
Wednesday 11 <sup>th</sup>	Advent Feria	11.00am	STM	<b>Mass 'n' Mingle</b>	Doreen Archer (Ints)	
Thursday 12 <sup>th</sup>	Advent Feria	10.00am	STM	<b>Mass</b>	Mirek Cerowski (RIP)	
Friday 13 <sup>th</sup>	St Lucy	10.00am	STM	Mass	David and Patricia Rodger (Anniv) (Mem Mass)	
				followed by <b>Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament</b>		
		12 noon	SJW	<b>Mass</b>	Pro Populo	
Saturday 14 <sup>th</sup>	St John of the Cross	10.00am	SJW	Mass	Edith Whatling (RIP)	
				followed by <b>Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Confessions</b>		
		<b>4.15pm</b>	STM	<b>Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Confessions</b>		
<b>Sunday 15<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT</b>	<b>5.00pm</b>	STM	<b>Vigil Mass</b>	<b>Michael and Margaret Higgins (Anniv)</b>	
		<b>9.00am</b>	STM	<b>Mass</b>	<b>Maureen Pearson (RIP)</b>	
		<b>11.00am</b>	SJW	<b>Mass</b>	<b>Anastasia Whale (Anniv)</b>	

*Welcome to Mass today. We extend a special welcome to anybody joining us for the first time.*

*Please introduce yourself, and if you are able, stay for refreshments after the Mass.*

Through our readings, we are invited to reflect on themes of joyful return, partnership in the gospel, and clearing the path for Jesus.

The prophet Baruch speaks of God leading His people back with mercy and justice. This journey back to God is not just a physical return but a spiritual one. As we prepare for the coming of Christ, we are called to examine our hearts and return to God with joy and trust.

St Paul's prayer for the Philippians is that their love may abound more and more, filled with knowledge and insight. As we prepare for Christ's coming, we too should pray for growth in love and understanding. This prayer encourages us to deepen our relationships with others and with God.

The message of St John the Baptist was compelling because people were overwhelmed by the difficulties of their time. He offered them hope by announcing a change was coming, which they needed to be ready for. This preparation wasn't passive; it required active effort. His call to baptism was a call to leave behind old habits and prepare for something new. It was about transforming their hearts and lives to welcome Jesus.

Just as St John the Baptist proclaimed God's work, we too are also called to reveal God through our lives. Our actions and words should reflect our faith and help others encounter Jesus. However, to do this effectively, we must first confront and overcome our own obstacles.

Let us pray. Lord, help us prepare our hearts for Your coming. Guide us to remove obstacles that keep us from You. Strengthen our love and faith as we journey together. Amen.

**STM and SJW Website:** [stmcov.org/wp/](http://stmcov.org/wp/)

**Facebook:** Catholic Parishes of St Thomas More and St Joseph the Worker

**Livestream webcam:** <https://www.youtube.com/@stmandsjtw-cov>

**Coventry Catholic Deanery:** [www.coventry-catholicdeanery.org.uk](http://www.coventry-catholicdeanery.org.uk)

**OFFERTORIES**

**Collections STM: £737.10 | SJW: £243.00**

*Thank you for your continued generosity*

**WE PRAY FOR THE SOULS OF Daniel Harrington, Brian Jolley, Sebastiao Batista do Nascimento, Patrick Brown, Catherine Brookes, Monica Hollinshead, Cathal Kelly and Stephen Naughton** together with all who have died recently. We pray for them and their families at this time. May they rest in peace.

**WE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO ARE SICK AND UNWELL:** Angie Browne, Frank Cunningham, Carl Lightfoot, Elaine Fossett, Margaret Eason, Madge Ward, Heather Walton, Jay Veeman, Pat Farr, Phil Sands, Margaret Kelly, Joanna MacKinnon, Hilary Hanson, Debbie Colby, Monika Tokarska-Hosoi, Joan Theaker, Veronica Hammond, Peter Kennedy, Alice Rowland, John Walker, Pauline Cullinane, Beatrice Upham, Peter Carvell, Sheila Jenkins, Lillian Chapman, Irena Bienek, Josie McElroy, Georgina Brannigan-Smith, Ann Kenny, Rose Warburton, Keelin Treharne, David O'Grady and Joan O'Leary.

**ON SUNDAY** during the 9.00am Mass, Luke Gray will be Confirmed and make his First Holy Communion. Please keep him in your prayers as he prepares for his important moment in his life.

**STM CHRISTMAS RAFFLE** will be drawn after the 9.00am Mass today in the MRR. Please do stay for the drawer if you are able.

**WALK WITH ME** booklets and calendars are available for everyone to use as part of your private reading and meditations.

**GREETING CARDS FOR PRISONERS:** After each Mass today at both STM and SJW there will be greeting card signing sessions for prisoners around the world. Many have been unfairly imprisoned and are victims of torture. Please come along and sign a card to let them know they are not forgotten. Cards and information will be provided. Donations towards the £2.80 price of a stamp would be very welcome. More information at <http://www.acatuk.org.uk>

**OUR NEWSLETTER** for the next month or two will be a double edition each week and will also include the Scripture Readings for Sunday Mass. Previously, SJW and STM had different ways of providing the readings to the congregation, so this new way means that all Masses are following the same format.

**MASS CARDS:** If you require a card with the Order of Mass text, please ask one of the welcomers for a copy.

**RORATE MASSES** will take place at 7.00am on Tuesday mornings in the side chapel at STM. The Rorate Caeli Mass is a traditional Advent devotion wherein the Mass of the Blessed Virgin Mary for Advent is offered just before dawn. The Mass is lit only by candlelight and because it is a votive Mass in Mary's honour, white vestments are worn instead of Advent violet. In the dimly lit setting, we prepare to honour the Light of the world, who is soon to be born, and offer praise to God for the gift of Our Lady. As the Mass proceeds and sunrise approaches, the church becomes progressively brighter, illumined by the sun as our faith is illumined by Christ. After the Mass, tea, coffee and toast will be available in the MRR.

**ON FRIDAY'S** there will be an extra Mass at 12noon in SJW which will be followed by a light soup lunch.

**ADVENT HOLY HOUR:** The Great Advent Antiphons, known as the 'O' antiphons are prayed before the Magnificat at Evening Prayer. Each antiphon is based on a title for Jesus taken from the Old Testament. Today most people know them from the Advent Carol, 'O Come, O Come Emmanuel.' During the Holy Hour on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> December, we will listen to the scripture passages and meditate on the different titles of Christ as we prepare for his coming at Christmas.

**ADVENT CONFESSIONS:** In readying ourselves for the final coming of the Lord the Church encourages us to make our confession during the Advent season. Do give some thought to going to Confession during Advent – especially if it has been some time since you last came. After all, Confession is a celebration of God's mercy. As well as the usual times at STM on Saturday evening (4.15pm – 4.45pm) and at SJW on Saturday morning (10.30am – 11.00am). There will also be a Penitential Service with visiting priests available for Confession.

**WARWICK UNIVERSITY MASS** at SJW will begin again on January 12<sup>th</sup> at 12.45pm. A number of students will be returning home for the Christmas holiday, so we wish them safe travels and a blessed time with family and friends.

**ON MONDAY** the church celebrates the transferred Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Patroness of the Archdiocese of Birmingham. The title of the Immaculate Conception recognises Mary's privilege of coming into the world free from sin. On this day, the Church celebrates this special privilege given to Mary and in the Mass, we can thank her for watching over and protecting all people.

**ROSARY, MASS AND PROCESSION** on Monday evening at STM. To help celebrate the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, at 6.40pm we shall pray the Rosary for peace in the world, followed by 7.00pm Mass. This will conclude (weather permitting!) with a candlelight procession to the Shrine of Our Lady at STM.

**PENITENTIAL SERVICE** on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> December at 7.00pm in STM when several priests will be available for confessions.

**SECOND COLLECTION** after all Masses today for the Poor Parishes of the Archdiocese.

**FAMILY LUNCH** on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> December from 1.00pm – 2.30pm in the MRR. Bring and share table and craft activities for the children. If any of our younger families are interested in coming along, please sign the sheet at the back of church.

**BAPTISM PREPARATION COURSE** Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> December in MRR

**SINGING FOR FUN** will be held at SJW in the Parish Hall on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> December at 7.00pm. All welcome to come for a sing.

**BLESSING OF STRAW AND BAMBINELLI** at all Masses next week, 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>. The straw that is blessed can be taken away and placed in your homes, in your Christmas Crib or beneath the tablecloth which covers the table for Christmas Day lunch. It symbolises that our homes become little Bethlehem's where we make Christ and our visitors welcome. St John Paul II encouraged children to bring the baby Jesus (Bambinelli) from each of their Nativity sets to Church to be blessed. This Advent tradition is a way for all of us to connect our Nativity scene at home to the celebration of Christmas at our church.

**PRAYER TO OUR LADY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION:** O most Holy Virgin, immaculate in body and spirit, look kindly on me as I implore your powerful intercession. O most Holy Mother, receive my prayers as I present them to God: (state your intentions here). O Mary, Mother of Jesus and our Mother, you intercede for us with your Son. O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee. Amen.

**IF YOU ARE A VISITOR** to our Masses and not a Catholic, or a Catholic unable to receive, you are very welcome to come forward to receive a blessing. As you approach, please have your arm crossed over your chest, so that the minister knows to give a blessing. If you require a celiac host, please let us know before Mass.

**OUR THANKS** to the family of the late Daniel Harrington for the donations received to SJW after his Requiem Mass last week.

**SJW CHRISTMAS HAMPER RAFFLE:** Tickets for the Christmas Hamper will be available after all Masses at SJW.

**NEXT SUNDAY** is Gaudete Sunday one of the two days in a year when the liturgical colour is rose. You might like to consider wearing something rose at Mass to fully immerse yourself in this Sunday of rejoicing.

**OUR PIETY STALLS** are open after all Masses with a wide variety of Christmas Cards and other gifts are available.

**REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR:** Thank you for your year-round donations to the Cheylesmore Food Hub. This time of year, they are particularly needed, so there is a reverse Advent Calendar where you give, instead of receiving, during Advent. Could you donate an item or two from the calendar? Boxes for donations are in the church porch. There are posters at the back of church for the list of items.

**ROCK CHOIR CONCERT** on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> December from 1.30pm – 2.30pm at STM. Donations gratefully received and will be divided by Zoe's Place and Cheylesmore Foodhub. Please see the poster for more information. All welcome to come along.

**LECTIO DIVINA** is the ancient practice of slow, conscious reading of a biblical or sacred text with contemplation and silent prayer. It is meant to promote communication with God and a deeper knowledge of Christ, in our lives today. In Advent there will be weekly sessions of Lectio Divina, on Tuesday mornings at 11.00am at SJW and on Thursday evenings at 6.30pm at STM. During this time of prayerful reading, we shall use the Gospel reading of the next Sunday Mass.

**CHRISTMAS CARDS** will be available next week. Please do take an extra card to share with any neighbours or parishioners that would welcome an invitation to these Masses.

**REMEMBERING A LOVED ONE:** If you would like to give a bauble in memory of departed loved ones, the sheets are available at the back of church to write the names on and a basket for you to place any donations for the bauble. The baubles will then be placed on the trees in church and the names printed off in a Book of Remembrance.

**LUKE THEOBALD** a third year Seminarian for our Archdiocese, studying at the Venerable English College in Rome will be starting his extended placement with us next Saturday. As part of their formation, Seminarians spend time in a parish on an Extended Pastoral Placement. This is an opportunity to really get to know a parish and I am sure Luke will be kept busy! His presence among us will also be a reminder of our constant need to pray for an increase in Vocations to the Sacred Priesthood. In the last ten years, numbers have dropped considerably resulting in a dearth of ordinations. We pray that more men will have the courage to answer the Lord's calling in their lives.

**SUNDAY MISSALS** for those who preordered them, have arrived and are ready for collection from the Piety Stalls. In the coming weeks, we will be placing another order, so if anyone else would like a copy, please place your order at the Piety Stall. £20 a copy.

**ASDA CASHPOT FOR SCHOOLS:** Many thanks to everyone who helped to raise a total of £531.50 for STM School

**LIVE SIMPLY TIP OF THE MONTH:** Please consider choosing Christmas gifts that help people in developing countries to help themselves. You can buy from catalogues available in church, shop online at [worldgifts.cafod.org.uk](http://worldgifts.cafod.org.uk) or donate to the retiring collections at STM on the 14<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> December. Parishioners at STM have donated £13,729 since 2008 to buy CAFOD World Gifts for our virtual village. LiveSimply in solidarity with people in poverty.

**WRAP UP WARM:** As the temperatures are dropping outside, and our church heating systems sometimes struggle, it might be an idea to wear an extra layer if coming to Mass, taking the advice, we find in the Book of Proverbs: 'snow may come, she has no fears for her household, with all her servants warmly clothed.'

**CATHEDRAL CAROL SERVICE** on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> December. If anyone would be interested in attending the Carol Service in Coventry Cathedral at 5.00pm, could you please write your name on the list at the back of church.

**CHEYLESMORE FOODHUB:** It is now possible to support the work of the Foodhub through financial donations. It allows for more flexibility for the Trust to purchase foods. The required information is Cheylesmore Food Hub CAF Bank Ltd, Sort Code: 40-52-40 and the Account no: 00034145.

**UHCW PETITION SIGNATURES:** Your signature could help ensure the future of Catholic supervision at UHCW. By signing this petition, you are not committing to any further communication but helping to show the importance of spiritual and pastoral care for Catholics who are in hospital.

**SEVEN DAY CANDLES** can be sponsored for £5. Please bring the information to the Sacristy at STM and SJW. At STM the candles can be sponsored for St Thomas More, Our Lady, St Joseph and the Sacred Heart and at SJW they can be sponsored for St Joseph, Our Lady, St Anthony and the Sacred Heart.

**LIVESTREAM FACILITIES** at both STM and SJW have now changed and are available through one page on YouTube. This is to help keep us in line with Data Protection and Safeguarding requirements. For details about the livestream, please see the front of this newsletter.

**SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION:** Any children, who are not in Catholic Schools, but wish to be prepared for the Sacrament of First Confession, First Holy Communion or Confirmation need to speak to Fr Simon by Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> December.

**SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION PREPARATION** will begin with an initial meeting on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> at 6.00pm followed by the first class on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> from 5.00pm – 6.00pm in the MRR.

**FIRST HOLY COMMUNION AND CONFESSION PREPARATION** will begin in the New Year on Saturday afternoon from 3.30pm – 4.30pm in the MRR.

**THE CHAPEL OF UNITY** are hosting twenty-minute Meditations and Reflections on Advent Scriptures at 6.00pm on Monday evenings. These will be held via Zoom and can be accessed using the Meeting ID: 880 8086 4348 with Passcode: 900236. Please see the poster for more information and details.

**STM SCHOOL CAROL SERVICE** will be held on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> December in the afternoon at 2.00pm. All parishioners are welcome to attend these events. More details to follow.

**SJW PHONELINE:** Please note that the phonenumber and answerphone at SJW are no longer checked on a regular basis, so to speak to Fr Simon please ring 024 7641 1900.

**A MASS OF THANKSGIVING** for Sarah Collins will take place on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> December at 2.00pm in STM. Any parishioners, or parents of past pupils are invited to attend as we give thanks for all that Sarah has given to the school as Headteacher and wish her every blessing as she moves into this new chapter of her life.

**KINGDOM OF GOD PRAYER GROUP** There will be no meetings over Christmas on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> or 30<sup>th</sup> December. Meetings resume on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> January at 7.00pm. All welcome.

**KNITTED BABY CARDIGANS** are required by the University Hospital for premature babies. If you, or any friends can knit any, they can be given in at church, so that the Knights of St Columba will pass them to the Coventry Clothing Charity.

**MASS INTENTIONS** The Mass is the greatest prayer we can offer as Catholics since it is the 'source and summit' of the Christian Life. A Mass can be offered for several reasons: in thanksgiving, for the intentions of another person or as is most common, for the repose of the soul of someone who has died. Mass offering envelopes are available at the back of both churches. Please fill in the required information and hand it to Fr Simon or push through the Presbytery letterbox. The Mass will then be offered, and you'll see the details on the front page of this sheet. We ask that Masses be booked three months in advance of your required date. Preferred dates cannot be guaranteed—someone else might have asked for a particular day before you, but the nearest date will be offered.

**HOUSE VISITS** to the sick and housebound are an important part of the life of the church. Any parishioners who would welcome a visit, are asked to contact Fr Simon, Deacon Leo or Deacon David so a visit can then be arranged.

**RED BOXES:** Would all those at SJW who support the work of the Missio Appeal (Red Boxes), please bring their boxes to the Sacristy by Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> December. For more information about supporting the work of Missio, please speak to Joyce Connolly.

**'A DANA GOOD CHRISTMAS'** on 22<sup>nd</sup> December at 3.30pm in Birmingham Town Hall. Please see the poster at the back of church.

**LARGE PRINT NEWSLETTERS** are available by request. If you would like one printing, please speak to Fr Simon.

**OLD POSTAGE STAMPS:** We are collecting stamps for RNIB in the boxes at the back of the churches. Please ensure that stamps are trimmed with 1cm of paper around the edge. Please separate British and Overseas stamps. Please do not include pre-printed postage marks.

**DON'T FORGET** to save all the stamps from the many Christmas cards you receive this year and then bring them in for the RNIB collections.

**LOURDES PILGRIMAGE** with the Archdiocese has now been announced and will take place from Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> – Friday 30<sup>th</sup> May 2025. There has been a great tradition of parishioners from both STM and SJW joining this pilgrimage, so please do make a note in your diary. If you haven't been, maybe the Jubilee Year of 2025 is the year to go. More information will be available earlier in the New Year.

**ONLINE GIVING:** If you were unable to give via the Offertory Collection at Sunday Mass, you can give online to either parish by scanning this QR code and following the instructions on the website.



**GIFT AID GIVING:** If you are a UK Taxpayer and would like to increase your weekly giving, at no extra cost to yourself, please consider Gift Aiding your donation. Through this scheme we are able to claim 25p on every £1 donated. More information available from Tony Curristan at STM and June Palmer at SJW.

**GOING INTO HOSPITAL:** Anyone going into hospital, needs to be sure to tell the ward staff they are a Catholic and would like to see the Catholic Chaplain. Please also notify the Parish Clergy, so a visit, either by them or the Chaplain can be arranged.

**SAFEGUARDING:** The Parish operates in accordance with Statutory Safeguarding Guidance and the National and Archdioceses policies and procedures at all times. Our Parish Safeguarding Representatives are Claire Rutter and Amanda Kelly at STM and Henry Whitney at SJW. They can be contacted using the emails below or alternatively the Diocesan Safeguarding Team can be contacted on 0121 230 6240 or email [safeguarding@rcaob.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@rcaob.org.uk) if you have any concern.

**YEAR OF JUBILEE:** Pope Francis has declared that 2025 will be a year of Jubilee. The theme is 'Pilgrims of Hope' and is a year of hope for a world suffering the impacts of war, the ongoing effects of COVID-19 pandemic, and a climate crisis. The Jubilee Year is a time to re-establish a proper relationship with God, with one another, and with all of creation. The concept of Jubilee or 'Holy Year' was used to declare special years for forgiveness and reconciliation.



The first Jubilee was declared by Pope Boniface VIII on 22nd February 1300 (Feast of the Chair of St. Peter), to mark the beginning of that century. He later recommended it occurring every 100 years.

Various other Popes changed the length of the interval between the observances. But Pope Saint Paul II set the present 25-year interval in the 1500s. So Holy Years are "ordinary" when they occur at regular intervals – 25 years in these modern times – and 'extraordinary' when they are proclaimed for a very special reason.

More recently a Great Jubilee was declared in 2000 by Pope Saint John Paul II to celebrate the new millennium. That Jubilee year brought the total number of universal Jubilee years to 28 that so far had been celebrated by the Church.

Intended as a time of conversion and emphasis on God's mercy and forgiveness of sins, Jubilees begin with the opening of the Holy Door in St. Peter's Basilica. Holy Doors at each of the four papal basilicas in Rome are destination points for pilgrims, who pass through seeking special graces.

The Jubilee Year will run from the opening of the Holy Door in St Peter's Basilica in Rome, on Tuesday 24 December 2024 to the Feast of Epiphany 2026.

#### Parish Administrator and Room Bookings

Amanda Kelly [admin.stm.covty@rcaob.org.uk](mailto:admin.stm.covty@rcaob.org.uk)

#### Safeguarding Representatives

Claire Rutter and Amanda Kelly (STM) [sg.stm.covty@rcaob.org.uk](mailto:sg.stm.covty@rcaob.org.uk)  
Henry Whitney (SJW) [sg.stjoseph.covty@rcaob.org.uk](mailto:sg.stjoseph.covty@rcaob.org.uk)

#### Giving and Gift Aid

Tony Curristan (STM) [ga.stm.covty@rcaob.org.uk](mailto:ga.stm.covty@rcaob.org.uk)  
June Palmer (SJW) [ga.stjoseph.covty@rcaob.org.uk](mailto:ga.stjoseph.covty@rcaob.org.uk)

## READINGS FOR SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

### FIRST READING

**Baruch 5:1-9**

Take off the garment of your sorrow and affliction, O Jerusalem, and put on for ever the beauty of the glory from God. Put on the robe of the righteousness from God; put on your head the crown of the glory of the Everlasting. For God will show your splendour everywhere under heaven. For your name will for ever be called by God: 'Peace of righteousness and glory of godliness'. Arise, O Jerusalem, stand upon the height and look towards the east and see your children gathered from west and east, at the word of the Holy One, rejoicing that God has remembered them. For they went forth from you on foot, led away by their enemies; but God will bring them back to you, carried in glory, as on a royal throne. For God has ordered that every high mountain and the everlasting hills be made low and the valleys filled up to make level ground, so that Israel may walk safely in the glory of God. The woods and every fragrant tree have shaded Israel at God's command. For God will lead Israel with joy in the light of his glory, with the mercy and righteousness that come from him.

### RESPONSORIAL PSALM Ps 126(125):1-2b. 2c-3. 4-5. 6. R/3

*R:* What great deeds the Lord worked for us!  
Indeed, we were glad.

When the Lord brought back the exiles of Sion,  
we thought we were dreaming.  
Then was our mouth filled with laughter;  
on our tongues, songs of joy. *R*

Then they said among the nations,  
'What great deeds the Lord worked for them!'  
What great deeds the Lord worked for us!  
Indeed, we were glad. *R*

Bring back our exiles, O Lord,  
as streams in the Negeb.  
Those who are sowing in tears  
will sing when they reap. *R*

They go out, they go out, full of tears,  
bearing seed for the sowing;  
they come back, they come back with a song,  
bearing their sheaves. *R*

### SECOND READING

**Philippians 1:4-6,8-11**

Brothers and sisters: I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all, making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!  
Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight;  
all flesh shall see the salvation of God.  
Alleluia!

### GOSPEL READING

**Luke 3:1-6**

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness. And he went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall become straight, and the rough places shall become level ways, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."'