Third Sunday of Advent, Year B

The Collect:

Rite I:
Stir up thy power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let thy bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be honor and glory, world without end. Amen.

Rite II:
Stir up your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

Old Testament: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

[1] The spirit of the LORD God is upon me
because the LORD has anointed me;
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,
to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives
and release to the prisoners,
[2] to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor
and the day of vengeance of our God,
to comfort all who mourn,
[3] to provide for those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a garland instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.

4 They shall build up the ancient ruins;
    they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities,
    the devastations of many generations.

8 For I, the LORD, love justice,
    I hate robbery and wrongdoing;
I will faithfully give them their recompense,
    and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.
9 Their descendants shall be known among the nations
    and their offspring among the peoples;
all who see them shall acknowledge
    that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed.
10 I will greatly rejoice in the LORD;
    my whole being shall exult in my God,
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation;
    he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland
    and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
11 For as the earth brings forth its shoots
    and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so the LORD God will cause righteousness and praise
    to spring up before all the nations.

Psalm: Psalm 126 or Canticle 3 or Canticle 15

1 When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion, *
    then were we like those who dream.
2 Then was our mouth filled with laughter, *
    and our tongue with shouts of joy.
3 Then they said among the nations, *
    "The LORD has done great things for them."
4 The LORD has done great things for us, *
    and we are glad indeed.
5 Restore our fortunes, O LORD, *
    like the watercourses of the Negev.

[6] Those who sowed with tears *
will reap with songs of joy.
[7] Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed, *
will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.

or

My soul doth magnify the Lord, *
and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior.
For he hath regarded *
the lowliness of his handmaiden.
For behold from henceforth *
all generations shall call me blessed.
For he that is mighty hath magnified me, *
and holy is his Name.
And his mercy is on them that fear him *
throughout all generations.
He hath showed strength with his arm; *
he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
He hath put down the mighty from their seat, *
and hath exalted the humble and meek.
He hath filled the hungry with good things, *
and the rich he hath sent empty away.
He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel, *
as he promised to our forefathers,
Abraham and his seed for ever.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

or

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior; *
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.
From this day all generations will call me blessed: *
the Almighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his Name.
He has mercy on those who fear him *
in every generation.
He has shown the strength of his arm, *
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.
He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, *
and has lifted up the lowly.
He has filled the hungry with good things, *
and the rich he has sent away empty.
He has come to the help of his servant Israel, *
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,
The promise he made to our fathers, *
to Abraham and his children for ever.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

Epistle: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

16 Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 give thanks in all circumstances, for this is
the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. 19 Do not quench the Spirit. 20 Do not despise
prophecies, 21 but test everything; hold fast to what is good;22 abstain from every form
of evil.

23 May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely, and may your spirit and soul
and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 The
one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

Gospel: John 1:6-8, 19-28

6 There was a man sent from God whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness to
testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. 8 He himself was not the
light, but he came to testify to the light.

[19] This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from
Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" [20] He confessed and did not deny it, but he
confessed, "I am not the Messiah." [21] And they asked him, "What then? Are you
Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." [22] Then
they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What
do you say about yourself?" [23] He said,

"I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness,
'Make straight the way of the Lord,' "

as the prophet Isaiah said.

[24] Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. [25] They asked him, "Why, then, are you
baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" [26] John
answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not
know, [27] the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the strap of his
sandal." [28] This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

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