

## Readings for December 5, 2010

### FIRST LESSON: Isaiah 11:1–10

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse,  
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

<sup>2</sup>The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him,  
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
the spirit of counsel and might,  
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

<sup>3</sup>His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.  
He shall not judge by what his eyes see,  
or decide by what his ears hear;

<sup>4</sup>but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,  
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;  
he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,  
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.

<sup>5</sup>Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist,  
and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

<sup>6</sup>The wolf shall live with the lamb,  
the leopard shall lie down with the kid,  
the calf and the lion and the fatling together,  
and a little child shall lead them.

<sup>7</sup>The cow and the bear shall graze,  
their young shall lie down together;  
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

<sup>8</sup>The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,  
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.

<sup>9</sup>They will not hurt or destroy  
on all my holy mountain;  
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD  
as the waters cover the sea.

<sup>10</sup>On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the  
nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

### PSALM: Psalm 72:1–7, 18–19

Give the king your justice, O God,  
and your righteousness to the king's son;

**<sup>2</sup>that he may rule your people righteously  
and the poor with justice;**

<sup>3</sup>that the mountains may bring prosperity to the people,  
and the little hills bring righteousness.

**<sup>4</sup>He shall defend the needy among the people;  
he shall rescue the poor and crush the oppressor.**

<sup>5</sup>He shall live as long as the sun and moon endure,

from one generation to another.

**<sup>6</sup>He shall come down like rain upon the mown field,  
like showers that water the earth.**

<sup>7</sup>In his time shall the righteous flourish;  
there shall be abundance of peace till the moon shall be no more.

**<sup>18</sup>Blessed be the LORD GOD, the God of Israel,  
who alone does wondrous deeds!**

<sup>19</sup>And blessed be his glorious name forever,  
and may all the earth be filled with his glory. Amen. Amen.

## **SECOND LESSON: Romans 15:4–13**

<sup>4</sup>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. <sup>5</sup>May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup>so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>7</sup>Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. <sup>8</sup>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, <sup>9</sup>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";

<sup>10</sup>and again he says,

"Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people";

<sup>11</sup>and again,

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

<sup>12</sup>and again Isaiah says,

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

<sup>13</sup>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.

## **GOSPEL: Matthew 3:1–12**

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, <sup>2</sup>"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." <sup>3</sup>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.'"

<sup>4</sup>Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. <sup>5</sup>Then the people of Jerusalem and all

Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, <sup>6</sup>and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

<sup>7</sup>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? <sup>8</sup>Bear fruit worthy of repentance. <sup>9</sup>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. <sup>10</sup>Even now the ax 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.

<sup>11</sup>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. <sup>12</sup>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."

## Readings for December 12, 2010

### FIRST LESSON: Isaiah 35:1–10

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,  
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;  
like the crocus <sup>2</sup>it shall blossom abundantly,  
and rejoice with joy and singing.

The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,  
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.

They shall see the glory of the LORD,  
the majesty of our God.

<sup>3</sup>Strengthen the weak hands,  
and make firm the feeble knees.

<sup>4</sup>Say to those who are of a fearful heart,  
"Be strong, do not fear!

Here is your God.  
He will come with vengeance,  
with terrible recompense.

He will come and save you."

<sup>5</sup>Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,  
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;

<sup>6</sup>then the lame shall leap like a deer,  
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.  
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,  
and streams in the desert;

<sup>7</sup>the burning sand shall become a pool,  
and the thirsty ground springs of water;  
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp,  
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

<sup>8</sup>A highway shall be there,  
and it shall be called the Holy Way;  
the unclean shall not travel on it,  
but it shall be for God's people;  
no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.

<sup>9</sup>No lion shall be there,  
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;  
they shall not be found there,  
but the redeemed shall walk there.

<sup>10</sup>And the ransomed of the LORD shall return,  
and come to Zion with singing;  
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;  
they shall obtain joy and gladness,  
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

### **PSALM: Psalm 146:4–9**

Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help,  
whose hope is in the LORD their God;

**<sup>6</sup>who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them;  
who keeps his promise forever;**

<sup>7</sup>who gives justice to those who are oppressed,  
and food to those who hunger.

**<sup>8</sup>The LORD sets the prisoners free; the LORD opens the eyes of the  
blind;**

**the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down;**

<sup>9</sup>the LORD loves the righteous; the LORD cares for the stranger;  
he sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates the way of the wicked.

**<sup>10</sup>The LORD shall reign forever,  
your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. Hallelujah!**

### **SECOND LESSON: James 5:7–10**

<sup>7</sup>Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. <sup>8</sup>You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. <sup>9</sup>Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! <sup>10</sup>As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

### **GOSPEL: Matthew 11:2–11**

<sup>2</sup>When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples <sup>3</sup>and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" <sup>4</sup>Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see:

<sup>5</sup>the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. <sup>6</sup>And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

<sup>7</sup>As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? <sup>8</sup>What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. <sup>9</sup>What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. <sup>10</sup>This is the one about whom it is written,

'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,  
who will prepare your way before you.'

<sup>11</sup>Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

## Readings for December 19, 2010

### FIRST LESSON: Isaiah 7:10–16

<sup>10</sup>Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, <sup>11</sup>Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. <sup>12</sup>But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test. <sup>13</sup>Then Isaiah said: "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? <sup>14</sup>Therefore the LORD himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. <sup>15</sup>He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. <sup>16</sup>For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.

### PSALM: Psalm 80:1–7, 16–18

Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock;  
shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim.

**<sup>2</sup>In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh,  
stir up your strength and come to help us.**

<sup>3</sup>Restore us, O God of hosts;  
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.

**<sup>4</sup>O LORD God of hosts,  
how long will you be angered despite the prayers of your people?**

<sup>5</sup>You have fed them with the bread of tears;  
you have given them bowls of tears to drink.

**<sup>6</sup>You have made us the derision of our neighbors,  
and our enemies laugh us to scorn.**

<sup>7</sup>Restore us, O God of hosts;  
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.

**<sup>16</sup>Let your hand be upon the man of your right hand,**

**the son of man you have made so strong for yourself.**

<sup>17</sup>And so will we never turn away from you;  
give us life, that we may call upon your name.

**<sup>18</sup>Restore us, O LORD God of hosts;  
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.**

## **SECOND LESSON: Romans 1:1–7**

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, <sup>2</sup>which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, <sup>3</sup>the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh <sup>4</sup>and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, <sup>5</sup>through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, <sup>6</sup>including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

<sup>7</sup>To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

## **GOSPEL: Matthew 1:18–25**

<sup>18</sup>Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup>Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. <sup>20</sup>But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

<sup>21</sup>She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." <sup>22</sup>All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

<sup>23</sup>"Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,

and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means, "God is with us."

<sup>24</sup>When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, <sup>25</sup>but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

## **Readings for December 26, 2010**

### **FIRST LESSON: Isaiah 63:7–9**

<sup>7</sup>I will recount the gracious deeds of the LORD,  
the praiseworthy acts of the LORD,  
because of all that the LORD has done for us,  
and the great favor to the house of Israel

that he has shown them according to his mercy,  
according to the abundance of his steadfast love.  
<sup>8</sup>For he said, "Surely they are my people,  
children who will not deal falsely";  
and he became their savior  
<sup>9</sup>in all their distress.  
It was no messenger or angel  
but his presence that saved them;  
in his love and in his pity he redeemed them;  
he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

### **PSALM: Psalm 148**

Hallelujah! Praise the LORD from the heavens;  
praise him in the heights.

**<sup>2</sup>Praise him, all you angels of his;  
praise him, all his host.**

<sup>3</sup>Praise him, sun and moon;  
praise him, all you shining stars.

**<sup>4</sup>Praise him, heaven of heavens,  
and you waters above the heavens.**

<sup>5</sup>Let them praise the name of the LORD;  
for he commanded, and they were created.

**<sup>6</sup>He made them stand fast forever and ever;  
he gave them a law which shall not pass away.**

<sup>7</sup>Praise the LORD from the earth,  
you sea monsters and all deeps;

**<sup>8</sup>fire and hail, snow and fog,  
tempestuous wind, doing his will;**

<sup>9</sup>mountains and all hills,  
fruit trees and all cedars;

**<sup>10</sup>wild beasts and all cattle,  
creeping things and winged birds;**

<sup>11</sup>kings of the earth and all peoples,  
princes and all rulers of the world;

**<sup>12</sup>young men and maidens,  
old and young together.**

<sup>13</sup>Let them praise the name of the LORD,  
for his name only is exalted, his splendor is over earth and heaven.

**<sup>14</sup>He has raised up strength for his people  
and praise for all his loyal servants,  
the children of Israel, a people who are near him. Hallelujah!**

### **SECOND LESSON: Hebrews 2:10–18**

<sup>10</sup>It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in

bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. <sup>11</sup>For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, <sup>12</sup>saying,

"I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters,  
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you."

<sup>13</sup>And again,

"I will put my trust in him."

And again,

"Here am I and the children whom God has given me."

<sup>14</sup>Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, <sup>15</sup>and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. <sup>16</sup>For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham. <sup>17</sup>Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. <sup>18</sup>Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

### **GOSPEL: Matthew 2:13–23**

<sup>13</sup>Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." <sup>14</sup>Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, <sup>15</sup>and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son."

<sup>16</sup>When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. <sup>17</sup>Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:

<sup>18</sup>"A voice was heard in Ramah,  
wailing and loud lamentation,  
Rachel weeping for her children;  
she refused to be consoled, because they are no more."

<sup>19</sup>When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, <sup>20</sup>Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead. <sup>21</sup>Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. <sup>22</sup>But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. <sup>23</sup>There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, "He will be

called a Nazorean."