FIRST READING: 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
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: 126

[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. Then they said
among the nations, “The LORD has done
great things for them.”
[3]The LORD has done great things for us,
and we are glad indeed.
[4]Restore our fortunes, O LORD,
like the watercourses of the Negeb.
[5]Those who sowed with tears
will reap with songs of joy.
[6]Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed,
will come again with joy, shouldering their
sheaves.

SECOND READING: 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 the words of prophets, 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 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 thong of his sandal.” [28]This
took place in Bethany across the Jordan where
John was baptizing.