

THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS

Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 40:1–11

- 1 Comfort, comfort my people,
says your God.
- 2 Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her
that her warfare is ended,
that her iniquity is pardoned,
that she has received from the LORD's hand
double for all her sins.
- 3 A voice cries:
"In the wilderness prepare the way of the
LORD;
make straight in the desert a highway for
our God.
- 4 Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made
low;
the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.
- 5 And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,
and all flesh shall see it together,
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."
- 6 A voice says, "Cry!"
And I said, "What shall I cry?"
All flesh is grass,
and all its beauty is like the flower of the
field.
- 7 The grass withers, the flower fades
when the breath of the LORD blows on it;
surely the people are grass.
- 8 The grass withers, the flower fades,
but the word of our God will stand for-
ever.
- 9 Get you up to a high mountain,
O Zion, herald of good news;
lift up your voice with strength,
O Jerusalem, herald of good news;
lift it up, fear not;
say to the cities of Judah,
"Behold your God!"
- 10 Behold, the Lord God comes with might,
and his arm rules for him;
behold, his reward is with him,
and his recompense before him.
- 11 He will tend his flock like a shepherd;
he will gather the lambs in his arms;
he will carry them in his bosom,
and gently lead those that are with
young.

Epistle: 2 Peter 3:8–14

⁸But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. ⁹The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. ¹⁰But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

¹¹Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, ¹²waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! ¹³But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

¹⁴Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace.

Holy Gospel: Mark 1:1–8

¹The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

²As it is written in Isaiah the prophet,

"Behold, I send my messenger before your
face,

who will prepare your way,

³ the voice of one crying in the wilderness:
'Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight,'"

⁴John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶Now John was clothed with camel's hair and wore a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷And he preached, saying, "After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. ⁸I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."



About the Cover: In the midst of so many retail stores preparing for a lucrative and domesticated Christmas, the Gospel for this Sunday might be a bit jarring. The Lord's prophet is the voice crying in the wilderness to prepare the way of the Lord. So today, the Lord's Word comes to us undomesticated, calling to repentance the wayward sinner and bringing forgiveness to the burdened. The Messiah is coming. He comes today bearing forgiveness and life.

