

FIRST READING **Isaiah 35**

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,
the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus
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.

Strengthen the weak hands,
and make firm the feeble knees.

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."

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;
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;

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.

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 traveller, not even fools, shall go astray.

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.

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.

For the Word of the LORD

SECOND READING Romans 7.21-8.4

A reading from Paul's letter to the Romans

So I find it to be a law
that when I want to do what is good,
evil lies close at hand.

For I delight in the law of God
in my inmost self,
but I see in my members
another law
at war with the law of my mind,
making me captive to the law of sin
that dwells in my members.

Wretched man that I am!
Who will rescue me from this body of death?

Thanks be to God
through Jesus Christ our Lord!
So then, with my mind
I am a slave to the law of God,
but with my flesh
I am a slave to the law of sin.

There is – therefore – now
no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
For the law of the Spirit of life
in Christ Jesus
has set you free from the law of sin
and of death.
For God has done what the law,
weakened by the flesh,
could not do:
by sending his own Son – in the likeness of sinful flesh,
and to deal with sin,
he condemned sin in the flesh,
so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled
in us, who walk – not according to the flesh – but according to the Spirit.
For the Word of the LORD