First Reading: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

1“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; 2to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; 3to grant to those who mourn in Zion — to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified. 4They 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 wrong; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. 9Their offspring shall be known among the nations, and their descendants in the midst of the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge them, that they are an offspring the Lord has blessed. 10I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul 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 like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. 11For as the earth brings forth its sprouts, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to sprout up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to sprout up before all the nations.”

Psalm 126

1When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion,* then were we like those who dream.
2Then was our mouth filled with laughter,* and our tongue with shouts of joy.*
3Then they said among the nations,* “The Lord has done great things for them.”
4The Lord has done great things for us,* and we are glad indeed.
5Restore our fortunes, O Lord, like the watercourses of the Negev.*
6Those who sowed with tears,* will reap with songs of joy.*
7Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed,* will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.

Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

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

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peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

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

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

19And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” 20He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, “I am not the Christ.” 21And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the Prophet?” And he answered, “No.” 22So they said to him, “Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?” 23He 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.) 25They asked him, “Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?” 26John answered them, “I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know, 27even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.” 28These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

Next Week’s Readings: