

# Collects and Readings

## 20 January 2019

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Epiphany

#### Collect

Almighty God, whose Son revealed in signs and miracles the wonder of your saving presence: renew your people with your heavenly grace, and in all our weakness sustain us by your mighty power; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

(or)

God of all mercy, your Son proclaimed good news to the poor, release to the captives, and freedom to the oppressed: anoint us with your Holy Spirit and set all your people free to praise you in Christ our Lord.

#### First Reading – Nehemiah 2

<sup>1</sup>In the month of Nisan in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was brought for him, I took the wine and gave it to the king. I had not been sad in his presence before, <sup>2</sup>so the king asked me, "Why does your face look so sad when you are not ill? This can be nothing but sadness of heart." I was very much afraid, <sup>3</sup>but I said to the king, "May the king live forever! Why should my face not look sad when the city where my ancestors are buried lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?" <sup>4</sup>The king said to me, "What is it you want?" Then I prayed to the God of heaven, <sup>5</sup>and

I answered the king, "If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favour in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my ancestors are buried so that I can rebuild it." <sup>6</sup>Then the king, with the queen sitting beside him, asked me, "How long will your journey take, and when will you get back?" It pleased the king to send me; so I set a time. <sup>7</sup>I also said to him, "If it pleases the king, may I have letters to the governors of Trans-Euphrates, so that they will provide me safe-conduct until I arrive in Judah? <sup>8</sup>And may I have a letter to Asaph, keeper of the royal park, so he will give me timber to make beams for the gates of the citadel by the temple and for the city wall and for the residence I will occupy?" And because the gracious hand of my God was on me, the king granted my requests. <sup>9</sup>So I went to the governors of Trans-Euphrates and gave them the king's letters. The king had also sent army officers and cavalry with me. <sup>10</sup>When Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official heard about this, they were very much disturbed that someone had come to promote the welfare of the Israelites. <sup>11</sup>I went to Jerusalem, and after staying there three days <sup>12</sup>I set out during the night with a few others. I had not told anyone what my God had put in my heart to do for Jerusalem. There were no mounts with me except the one I was riding on. <sup>13</sup>By night I went out through the Valley Gate toward the Jackal Well and the Dung Gate, examining the walls of Jerusalem, which had been broken down, and its gates, which had been destroyed by fire. <sup>14</sup>Then I moved on toward the Fountain Gate and the King's

Pool, but there was not enough room for my mount to get through; <sup>15</sup>so I went up the valley by night, examining the wall. Finally, I turned back and re-entered through the Valley Gate. <sup>16</sup>The officials did not know where I had gone or what I was doing, because as yet I had said nothing to the Jews or the priests or nobles or officials or any others who would be doing the work. <sup>17</sup>Then I said to them, "You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace." <sup>18</sup>I also told them about the gracious hand of my God on me and what the king had said to me. They replied, "Let us start rebuilding." So they began this good work. <sup>19</sup>But when Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite official and Geshem the Arab heard about it, they mocked and ridiculed us. "What is this you are doing?" they asked. "Are you rebelling against the king?" <sup>20</sup>I answered them by saying, "The God of heaven will give us success. We his servants will start rebuilding, but as for you, you have no share in Jerusalem or any claim or historic right to it."

#### Gospel – Luke 12:22-31

<sup>22</sup>Then Jesus said to his disciples: "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. <sup>23</sup>For life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. <sup>24</sup>Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are

than birds! <sup>25</sup>Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life? <sup>26</sup>Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest? <sup>27</sup>"Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labour or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these. <sup>28</sup>If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you – you of little faith! <sup>29</sup>And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. <sup>30</sup>For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. <sup>31</sup>But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.

#### Post Communion

Almighty Father, whose Son our Saviour Jesus Christ is the light of the world: may your people, illumined by your word and sacraments, shine with the radiance of his glory, that he may be known, worshipped, and obeyed to the ends of the earth; for he is alive and reigns, now and for ever.

#### Readings for next week – 27 January 2019 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Epiphany

- Nehemiah 4
- Luke 4:24-28