

Readings: Nativity of John the Baptist

Isaiah 49:1-6

Islands, listen to me,
pay attention, remotest peoples.
The Lord called me before I was born,
from my mother's womb he pronounced my name.
He made my mouth a sharp sword,
and hid me in the shadow of his hand.
He made me into a sharpened arrow,
and concealed me in his quiver.
He said to me, 'You are my servant (Israel)
in whom I shall be glorified';
while I was thinking, 'I have toiled in vain,
I have exhausted myself for nothing';
and all the while my cause was with the Lord,
my reward with my God.
I was honoured in the eyes of the Lord,
my God was my strength.
And now the Lord has spoken,
he who formed me in the womb to be his servant,
to bring Jacob back to him,
to gather Israel to him:
'It is not enough for you to be my servant,
to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back the survivors of Israel;
I will make you the light of the nations
so that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.'

Psalm Psalm 138:1-3,13-15

I thank you for the wonder of my being.
O Lord, you search me and you know me,
you know my resting and my rising,
you discern my purpose from afar.
You mark when I walk or lie down,
all my ways lie open to you.
I thank you for the wonder of my being.
For it was you who created my being,
knit me together in my mother's womb.
I thank you for the wonder of my being,
for the wonders of all your creation.
I thank you for the wonder of my being.
Already you knew my soul,

my body held no secret from you
when I was being fashioned in secret
and moulded in the depths of the earth.
I thank you for the wonder of my being.

Second reading Acts 13:22-26

Paul said: ‘God deposed Saul and made David their king, of whom he approved in these words, “I have selected David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart, who will carry out my whole purpose.” To keep his promise, God has raised up for Israel one of David’s descendants, Jesus, as Saviour, whose coming was heralded by John when he proclaimed a baptism of repentance for the whole people of Israel. Before John ended his career he said, “I am not the one you imagine me to be; that one is coming after me and I am not fit to undo his sandal.”

‘My brothers, sons of Abraham’s race, and all you who fear God, this message of salvation is meant for you.’

Gospel Acclamation cf.Lk1:76

Alleluia, alleluia!

As for you, little child, you shall be called

a prophet of God, the Most High.

You shall go ahead of the Lord

to prepare his ways before him.

Alleluia!

Gospel Luke 1:57-66,80

The time came for Elizabeth to have her child, and she gave birth to a son; and when her neighbours and relations heard that the Lord had shown her so great a kindness, they shared her joy.

Now on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; they were going to call him Zechariah after his father, but his mother spoke up. ‘No,’ she said ‘he is to be called John.’ They said to her, ‘But no one in your family has that name’, and made signs to his father to find out what he wanted him called. The father asked for a writing-tablet and wrote, ‘His name is John.’ And they were all astonished. At that instant his power of speech returned and he spoke and praised God. All their neighbours were filled with awe and the whole affair was talked about throughout the hill country of Judaea. All those

who heard of it treasured it in their hearts. 'What will this child turn out to be?' they wondered. And indeed the hand of the Lord was with him.

Meanwhile the child grew up and his spirit matured. And he lived out in the wilderness until the day he appeared openly to Israel.
