The Second Sunday before Advent

Collect

Heavenly Father, whose blessed Son was revealed to destroy the works of the devil
and to make us the children of God and heirs of eternal life:
grant that we, having this hope, may purify ourselves even as he is pure;
that when he shall appear in power and great glory we may be made like him
in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where he is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

OLD TESTAMENT READING Zephaniah 1. 7, 12–18

7 Be silent before the Lord GOD!
For the day of the LORD is at hand;
the LORD has prepared a sacrifice,
he has consecrated his guests.
12 At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps,
and I will punish the people
who rest complacently on their dregs,
those who say in their hearts,
'The LORD will not do good,
nor will he do harm.'
13 Their wealth shall be plundered,
and their houses laid waste.
Though they build houses,
they shall not inhabit them;
though they plant vineyards,
they shall not drink wine from them.
14 The great day of the LORD is near,
near and hastening fast;
the sound of the day of the LORD is bitter,
the warrior cries aloud there.
15 That day will be a day of wrath,
a day of distress and anguish,
a day of ruin and devastation,
a day of darkness and gloom,
a day of clouds and thick darkness,
16 a day of trumpet blast and battle cry
against the fortified cities
and against the lofty battlements.
17 I will bring such distress upon people
that they shall walk like the blind;
because they have sinned against the LORD,
their blood shall be poured out like dust,
and their flesh like dung.
18 Neither their silver nor their gold
will be able to save them
on the day of the LORD's wrath;
in the fire of his passion
the whole earth shall be consumed;
for a full, a terrible end
he will make of all the inhabitants of the earth.

NEW TESTAMENT READING 1 Thessalonians 5. 1–11

1 Concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. 2 For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. 3 When they say, 'There is peace and security,' then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labour pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! 4 But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; 5 for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness. 6 So then let us not fall asleep as others do but let us keep awake and be sober; 7 for those who sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night. 8 But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. 9 For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. 11 Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

GOSPEL Matthew 25. 14–30

Hear the holy gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to S. Matthew.
Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus said to his disciples,
14 'The kingdom of heaven is as if a man,
going on a journey, summoned his slaves and
entrusted his property to them; 15 to one he
gave five talents, to another two, to another
one, to each according to his ability. Then
he went away.
16 'The one who had received the five talents
went off at once and traded with them and
made five more talents. 17 In the same way,
the one who had the two talents made two
more talents. 18 But the one who had
received the one talent went off and dug a
hole in the ground and hid his master's
money.
19 'After a long time, the master of those
slaves came and settled accounts with them.
20 Then the one who had received the five
talents came forward, bringing five more
talents, saying, "Master, you handed over to
me five talents; see, I have made five more
talents." 21 His master said to him, "Well
done, good and trustworthy slave; you have
been trustworthy in a few things, I will put
you in charge of many things; enter into the
joy of your master." 22 And the one with the
two talents also came forward, saying,
"Master, you handed over to me two talents;
see, I have made two more talents." 23 His
master said to him, "Well done, good and
trustworthy slave; you have been
trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in
charge of many things; enter into the joy of
your master."
24 'Then the one who had received the one
talent also came forward, saying, "Master, I
knew that you were a harsh man, reaping
where you did not sow, and gathering where
you did not scatter seed; 25 so I was afraid,
and I went and hid your talent in the ground.
Here you have what is yours." 26 But his
master replied, "You wicked and lazy slave!
You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not
sow, and gather where I did not scatter?
27 Then you ought to have invested my
money with the bankers, and on my return, I
would have received what was my own with
interest. 28 So take the talent from him and
give it to the one with the ten talents. 29 For
to all those who have, more will be given,
and they will have an abundance; but from
those who have nothing, even what they
have will be taken away. 30 As for this
worthless slave, throw him into the outer
darkness, where there will be weeping and
gnashing of teeth."'

This is the gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

Post Communion

Gracious Lord, in this holy sacrament you give substance to our hope:
bring us at the last to that fullness of life for which we long;
through Jesus Christ our Saviour. **Amen.**