



**FIRST READING: IS 40: 1-11** 1 Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. 2 Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. 3 A voice of one calling: "In the desert prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. 4 Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. 5 And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken." 6 A voice says, "Cry out." and I said, "What shall I cry?" "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field. 7 The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the LORD blows on them. Surely the people are grass. 8 The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever." 9 You who bring good tidings to Zion, go up on a high mountain. You who bring good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, "Here is your God!" 10 See, the Sovereign LORD comes with power, and his arm rules for him. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him. 11 He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young. (NIV)

**PSALM 85:8-13** (Page 711 of the APB)

**SECOND READING: 2 PET 3:8-15A** 8 But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. 9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness.

He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. 11 Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives 12 As you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. 13 But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. 14 So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him. 15 Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. (NIV)

**GOSPEL: MK 1:1-8** 1 The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. 2 It is written in Isaiah the prophet: "I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way"-- 3 "A voice of one calling in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'" 4 And so John came, baptizing in the desert region and preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 5 The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. 6 John wore clothing made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts

and wild honey. 7 And this was his message: "After me will come one more powerful than I, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. 8 I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." (NIV)

**PRAYERS:** Denise Morton, Paddy Sander, Mike & Lindi, Marlene Palm, Deborah Lewis, Lynda Main, Keith Johnson, Lynn Edward, Charlie Kekana, Alexandra & Olivia Kessell, Kristin Pepper, Shirley Vermeulen, Merle Wilson.

**YEARS MIND:** Thelma May Hall



**BAPTISM:** Please pray for **Carter Wilkins** who is being baptised today. Pray also for his parents and godparents.

Dear Friends in Christ,

More on a hurried and harried life

Bishop Brian poses this question: "is my prayer life, my worship, and the community of faith the non-negotiable givens around which the rest of my life is fitted or is work the non – negotiable around which everything else is fitted. It is a daunting question. He then suggests that we put the question to prayer.

Prayer is such a struggle: the shape of our prayers are constantly affected by where we are in our spiritual journey, by the time demands on us, on our energy levels, on the noise that surrounds us and even our very understanding, or lack thereof, of who God is. Relax! Everyone struggles with prayer, clergy and the laos together. Bishop Duncan used to call his clergy twice a year to see him. Virtually the first question he asked was : "What are you reading and how's your prayer life?" If you answered that it was a struggle he would just smile in sympathy, for he knew just how hard it is to pray, to come before the Invisible One, to make space and to have faith.

But, in all of us, there is a longing. A longing for the greater Truth, for a place where we can work out our own meaning, where we can be loved unconditionally, where the mysteries of life, love and death can be given some air. A place where we are not alone. A place where it is not so much about our articulation but about our graced ability to listen in a silence filled with awareness.

Listen to the longing in you. Trust it.

Robert Llewellyn in his lovely little book on prayer, said that, in order to be a person who prays all the time, you need to be a person who prays some of the time. Rohr agreed by saying Sunday prayer is not enough.

Prayer is powerful. Prayer is transforming. Prayer is about hope. Prayer space is God's invitation – it only requires your simple "yes".