**Entrance Antiphon**

Rejoice, Jerusalem, and all who love her. Be joyful, all who were in mourning; exult and be satisfied at her consoling breast.

**1st Reading**

36:14-16, 19-23

A reading from the second book of Chronicles

All the heads of the priesthood, and the people too, added idolatry to idolatry, copying all the shameful practices of the nations and defiling the Temple that the Lord had consecrated for himself in Jerusalem. The Lord, the God of their ancestors, tirelessly sent them messenger after messenger, since he wished to spare his people and his house. But they ridiculed the messengers of God, they despised his words, they laughed at his prophets, until at last the wrath of the Lord rose so high against his people that there was no further remedy. Then, as his enemies burned down the Temple of God, demolished the walls of Jerusalem, set fire to all its palaces, and destroyed everything of value in it. The survivors were deported by Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon; they were to spare his people and his house. But even so, God did not abandon the exiles; he roused the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, to fulfil the word of the Lord that was spoken through Jeremiah, 'Until this land has enjoyed the fullness of time, the Temple that the Lord had consecrated for himself in Jerusalem. The Temple that the Lord had consecrated for himself in Jerusalem.

**Responsorial Psalm**

Ps 136

RESPONSE: Let my tongue be silenced, if I ever forget you!

By the rivers of Babylon there we sat and wept, remembering Zion; on the poplars that grew there we hung up our harps. /R.

For it was there that they asked us, our captors, for songs, our oppressors, for joy. 'Sing to us,' they said, 'one of Zion's songs.' /R.

O how could we sing the song of the Lord on alien soil? If I forget you, Jerusalem, let my right hand wither! /R.

O let my tongue cleave my mouth if I remember you not, if I prize not Jerusalem above all my joys! /R.

**2nd Reading**

2:4-10

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Ephesians

God loved us with so much love that he was generous with his mercy: when we were dead through our sins, he brought us to life with Christ - it is through grace that you have been saved - and raised us up with him and gave us a place with him in heaven, in Christ Jesus. This was to show for all ages to come, through his goodness towards us in Christ Jesus, how infinitely rich he is in grace, because it is by grace that you have been saved, through faith, not by anything of your own, but by a gift from God; not by anything that you have done, so that nobody can claim the credit. We are God’s work of art, created in Christ Jesus to live the good life as from the beginning he had meant us to live it. The Word of the Lord

**Gospel Acclamation**

John 3:16

Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ! God loved the world so much, he gave us his only Son, who all who believe in him might have eternal life. Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

**Gospel**

3:14-21

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

Jesus said to Nicodemus: ‘The Son of Man must be lifted up as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him. Yes, God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believed in him might not be lost but may have eternal life. For God sent his Son into the world not to condemn the world, but that through him the world might be saved. No one who believes in him will be condemned; but whoever refuses to believe is condemned already, because he has refused to believe in the name of God’s only Son. On these grounds is sentence pronounced: that though the light has come into the world men have shown they prefer darkness to the light because their deeds were evil. And indeed, everybody who does wrong hates the light and avoids it, for fear his actions should be exposed; but the man who lives by the truth comes out into the light, so that it may be plainly seen what he does is done in God.’

The Gospel of the Lord

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

**Responsorial Psalm**

Ps 136

RESPONSE: Let my tongue be silenced, if I ever forget you!

By the rivers of Babylon there we sat and wept, remembering Zion; on the poplars that grew there we hung up our harps. /R.

For it was there that they asked us, our captors, for songs, our oppressors, for joy. 'Sing to us,' they said, 'one of Zion’s songs.' /R.

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O let my tongue cleave my mouth if I remember you not, if I prize not Jerusalem above all my joys! /R.

**Response:** Thanks be to God.
God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son.

Although we praise our common Lord for all kinds of reasons, we praise and glorify him above all for the cross. It fills us with awe to see him dying like one accused. It is this for death of love for us. He passes over everything else that Christ did for our advantage and consolation and dwells incessantly on the cross. The proof of God's love for us, he says, is that Christ died for us while we were still sinners.

Moreover, he pointed to the cross, saying: God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that all who believe in him might not perish but have eternal life. And Paul writes: Since he did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for all, how can he fail to lavish every other gift upon us? And in his exhortation to humility he uses the same example, saying: You should have the same dispositions as you find in Christ Jesus. Although his nature was divine, he did not cling to his equality with God, but emptied himself to assume the condition of a slave. Bearing the human likeness, sharing the human lot, he humbled himself and was obedient even to the point of dying-dying on a cross!

Returning to the subject of love, Paul again urges his hearers to love one another, even as Christ loved us, and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. And Christ himself showed how the cross was his chief preoccupation, and how much he longed to suffer. In his ignorance, Peter, first of the Twelve, foundation of the Church, leader of the Apostles, protested: God forbid, Lord! This shall never happen to you! Listen to what Christ called him: Get behind, Satan.