

## A reading from the Prophet Isaiah (40:1-11)

'Console my people, console them'  
says your God.  
'Speak to the heart of Jerusalem  
and call to her  
that her time of service is ended,  
that her sin is atoned for,  
that she has received  
from the hand of the Lord  
double punishment for all her crimes.'  
A voice cries, 'Prepare in the wilderness  
a way for the Lord.  
Make a straight highway for our God  
across the desert.  
Let every valley be filled in,  
every mountain and hill be laid low,  
let every cliff become a plain,  
and the ridges a valley;  
then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed  
and all mankind shall see it;  
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.'  
A voice commands: 'Cry!'  
and I answered, 'What shall I cry?' –  
'All flesh is grass  
and its beauty like the wild flowers.  
The grass withers, the flower fades  
when the breath of the Lord blows on them.  
(The grass is without doubt the people.)  
The grass withers, the flower fades,  
but the word of our God remains for ever.'  
Go up on a high mountain,  
joyful messenger to Zion.  
Shout with a loud voice,  
joyful messenger to Jerusalem.  
Shout without fear, say to the towns of Judah,  
'Here is your God'.  
Here is the Lord the Lord coming with power,  
his arm subduing all things to him.  
The prize of his victory is with him,  
his trophies all go before him.  
He is like a shepherd feeding his flock,  
gathering lambs in his arms,  
holding them against his breast  
and leading to their rest the mother ewe.

The Word of the Lord.