



*Let the desert and the dry lands be glad,  
let the wasteland rejoice and bloom;  
Strengthen all weary hands,  
steady all trembling knees  
and say to the faint-hearted,  
'Be strong! Do not be afraid.  
Here is your God,  
Then the eyes of the blind will be opened,  
the ears of the deaf unsealed,  
then the lame will leap like a deer  
and the tongue of the dumb sing for joy;  
for water will gush in the desert  
and streams in the wastelands,  
the parched ground will become a marsh  
and the thirsty land springs of water;  
For those whom the Lord has ransomed will return,  
they will come to Zion shouting for joy,  
their heads crowned with joy unending;  
rejoicing and gladness will escort them  
and sorrow and sighing will take flight.*

## Isaiah 35 (selection)

Joy unending

## Saturday of Advent II

It is the genius and wonder of our faith that we are able to see into the inner reality of our physical existence and celebrate that inner reality. Isaiah speaks these words of his vision into a time when such a fulfilment would have seemed an impossible dream, a hope that could never be fulfilled.

Christians celebrate his words as portraying what is, is now. The ransomed have returned, along a highway through an impossible desert, the way of the cross. We shout and sing for joy: sorrow and sighing have taken flight. This we see and affirm even into the harshest of physical circumstances: into the face of death and destruction and oppression. Were all the worst scenarios of the ecological and social prophets of doom in our day to come to pass, yet will Christians gather week by week, the focal point of their liturgy, "Let us give thanks!" Nothing can take that away from the community of faith.