

## Reflection 11<sup>th</sup> December 2022

### Isaiah 35:1-10

#### Joy of the Redeemed

**35** The desert and the parched land will be glad;  
the wilderness will rejoice and blossom.

Like the crocus, <sup>2</sup> it will burst into bloom;  
it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy.

The glory of Lebanon will be given to it,  
the splendour of Carmel and Sharon;  
they will see the glory of the LORD,  
the splendour of our God.

<sup>3</sup> Strengthen the feeble hands,  
steady the knees that give way;

<sup>4</sup> say to those with fearful hearts,  
"Be strong, do not fear;

your God will come,  
he will come with vengeance;  
with divine retribution  
he will come to save you."

<sup>5</sup> Then will the eyes of the blind be opened  
and the ears of the deaf unstopped.

<sup>6</sup> Then will the lame leap like a deer,  
and the mute tongue shout for joy.  
Water will gush forth in the wilderness  
and streams in the desert.

<sup>7</sup> The burning sand will become a pool,  
the thirsty ground bubbling springs.  
In the haunts where jackals once lay,  
grass and reeds and papyrus will grow.

<sup>8</sup> And a highway will be there;  
it will be called the Way of Holiness;  
it will be for those who walk on that Way.

The unclean will not journey on it;  
wicked fools will not go about on it.

<sup>9</sup> No lion will be there,  
nor any ravenous beast;  
they will not be found there.

But only the redeemed will walk there,

<sup>10</sup> and those the LORD has rescued will return.  
They will enter Zion with singing;  
    everlasting joy will crown their heads.  
Gladness and joy will overtake them,  
    and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

## **Reflection**

When the Prophet Isaiah envisions a world transformed by the love of God he describes it as a desert transformed by abundant water. The parched desert will rejoice, the wilderness will burst into bloom and the countryside will bear witness to the glory and splendour of God. This may sound very poetic but in real life dry and barren landscapes do burst into bloom from time to time. In the Blue Mountains during the late summer of 2021 rare pink flannel flowers bloomed for the first time in about forty years in response to the devastation of the earlier bushfires, followed by abundant rain. People queued in their cars at various sites in the mountains waiting for their turn to witness the carpet of pink blossoms.

These almost miraculous events are signs of the goodness of God and those of us with faith will see them as glimpses of a time when all things will be made new, whole, and beautiful through Jesus Christ. In a few weeks' time Christians all over the world will celebrate the birth of Jesus. The prophet Isaiah lived many years before Jesus birth, but his words describe perfectly the change Jesus makes to our lives. Jesus is the one who is able to strengthen our feeble hands, and steady our knees when they give way; not in the same way our doctors or physios do, what I mean is that Jesus offers us hope both in this life and in the life to come. Jesus can strengthen our faith, and help us to see the signs of hope, joy, love, and peace in this world of ours.