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Saturday, December 11, 2010

**Morning Psalms 90; 149**

First Reading Isaiah 8:1-15

Second Reading 2 Thessalonians 3:6-18

Gospel Luke 22:31-38

Evening Psalms 80; 72

1 Lord, you have been our dwelling-place in all generations. 2 Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God. 3 You turn us back to dust, and say, 'Turn back, you mortals.' 4 For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is past, or like a watch in the night. 5 You sweep them away; they are like a dream, like grass that is renewed in the morning; 6 in the morning it flourishes and is renewed; in the evening it fades and withers. 7 For we are consumed by your anger; by your wrath we are overwhelmed. 8 You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your countenance. 9 For all our days pass away under your wrath; our years come to an end like a sigh. 10 The days of our life are seventy years, or perhaps eighty, if we are strong; even then their span is only toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly away. 11 Who considers the power of your anger? Your wrath is as great as the fear that is due to you. 12 So teach us to count our days that we may gain a wise heart. 13 Turn, O Lord! How long? Have compassion on your servants! 14 Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, so that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. 15 Make us glad for as many days as you have afflicted us, and for as many years as we have seen evil. 16 Let your work be manifest to your servants, and your glorious power to their children. 17 Let the favour of the Lord our God be upon us, and prosper for us the work of our hands—O prosper the work of our hands!

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If we were able to look at the entire span of our life from God's eternal perspective, it would be like a pinprick on a spectrum that stretches infinitely in both (or many) directions. If we magnified that pinprick, we would observe that of all the messages that God was trying to instill in us, year after year our whole life through, the two outstanding would be those of Christmas and Easter. What did God want to drive home in these about Himself and our relationship to God?

- Trust only in the arms of the Father, just as a child understands no truer love, protection or comfort apart from its own mother and father.
- Admit your helplessness, your inability to survive without constant nurture, just as that which an attentive parent gives a newborn infant.
- Give up your cross—that is, yourself—which you cannot carry alone in your weakness, and rely on the strength, love and everlasting grace that is in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

In the Advent season, let us experience these messages yet again—with the newness that they bring to our life *this* day—and let us turn our eyes to the manger and to the cross in humbleness and awe.

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*Prayer: Dear Everlasting Father, help us to approach you with the longing of an infant for its mother, the meekness of a child who wants only to be held in love, and the repentance of a man or woman who knows our limits. Thank you for your grace that reaches into eternity. Amen.*