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Tuesday, December 14, 2010

Morning Psalms 33; 146  
First Reading Isaiah 9:2-7  
Second Reading 2 Peter 1:12-21  
Gospel Luke 22:54-69  
**Evening Psalms 85; 94**

1 Lord, you were favourable to your land; you restored the fortunes of Jacob. 2 You forgave the iniquity of your people; you pardoned all their sin. 3 You withdrew all your wrath; you turned from your hot anger. 4 Restore us again, O God of our salvation, and put away your indignation towards us. 5 Will you be angry with us for ever? Will you prolong your anger to all generations? 6 Will you not revive us again, so that your people may rejoice in you? 7 Show us your steadfast love, O Lord, and grant us your salvation. 8 Let me hear what God the Lord will speak, for he will speak peace to his people, to his faithful, to those who turn to him in their hearts. 9 Surely his salvation is at hand for those who fear him, that his glory may dwell in our land. 10 Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will kiss each other. 11 Faithfulness will spring up from the ground, and righteousness will look down from the sky. 12 The Lord will give what is good, and our land will yield its increase. 13 Righteousness will go before him, and will make a path for his steps.

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Who were they who first thought to shape the Christian year in such a way as to give us Advent? This gift that “keeps on giving” stirs the memory, prompting us to feel its rhythms, to hear its poetry. It is the time of extraordinary promise and hope that shower us with grace upon grace. We reflect on God’s eternal vision, God’s forever dream of us.

Who was the ancient one who first sang, “Let me hear what God the Lord will speak, for God will speak peace to his people?” Who was that one who sang of steadfast love and faithfulness, of righteousness and peace both surrounding and holding us? *Let us hear, O God.*

I do not think God is waiting for peace to come among us. I do think God continues to speak peace in a million, million ways.

Last year on Christmas Eve our time of Advent waiting merged with our daughter’s pregnancy. Her contractions began as we arrived at their curb in Philadelphia. We shared in the long night of watching and waiting, of rubbing her back, of taking turns with our son-in-law as we timed the contractions. They left for the birthing center before dawn, and the baby was born on Christmas Day in the morning. We spent hours helping to tend mother and child. The prophet’s words, “A child has been born,” blessed my memory over and over again.

Pain, fatigue, laughter, tears. New life, new hope, new promise. God speaking peace once again.

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*Prayer: A Celtic Benediction: Deep peace of the running wave to you.....Deep peace of the flowing air to you. Deep peace of the quiet earth to you.....Deep peace of the shining stars to you. Deep peace of the Son of Peace to you.*