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Friday, December 24, 2010

Morning Psalms 102; 148
First Reading Isaiah 35:1-10
Second Reading Revelation 22:12-17, 21
Gospel Luke 1:67-80
Christmas Eve Psalm Psalm 132
Christmas Eve Psalm Psalm 114
Christmas Eve Reading Isaiah 59:15b-21
Christmas Eve Reading Philippians 2:5-11
Evening Psalms 130; 16

67 Then his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke this prophecy: 68 'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has looked favourably on his people and redeemed them. 99 He has raised up a mighty saviour for us in the house of his servant David, 70 as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, 71 that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us. 72 Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors, and has remembered his holy covenant, 73 the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham, to grant us 74 that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, 75 in holiness and righteousness before him all our days. 76 And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, 77 to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the forgiveness of their sins. 78 By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, 79 to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.' 80 The child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day he appeared publicly to Israel.

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Zechariah's blessing, traditionally called the Benedictus, recounts God's promises through the retelling of salvation history. A reminder that the hand of God has rescued God's people, Zechariah's blessing speaks of God's mercy and holy covenant through generations of the Lord's servants.

Though God's redemption comes about by no action of our own, God's people are invited to participate in the covenant, that they might "serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness, all of [their] days." Zechariah proclaims his own son's role in this work – preparing the way for the heavenly king and deliverer.

Have we listened to the prophet and prepared room in our lives for a mighty savior this Advent season? Our answer comes by way of our response: grateful worship and serving the Lord, all of our days.

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Prayer: Gracious God, we give you thanks that you have raised up a mighty savior to deliver us! We pray that as we welcome Christ the babe, we might prepare a place for him in our lives, on this Christmas Eve and always. Amen.