**FRIDAY DECEMBER 24 – IV WEEK OF ADVENT [C]**

**“Because of the tender mercy of our God by which the daybreak from on high will visit us to shine on those who sit in darkness and death's shadow, to guide our feet into the path of peace."**

**Zechariah blesses the Lord for He sees the promised salvation already taking place, already fulfilled. It is as if the Lord with the Incarnation of his Word has already visited and redeemed his people. Truly, with the Incarnation of the Word the entire world is redeemed, even if the historical actuation of redemption and of salvation occurring with the mystery of death and of the resurrection of Jesus is still lacking. In the vision of spirit, in the Holy Spirit, Zechariah already sees all the fruits of the visit and of the redemption of his God and Lord. This is why his is a true prophecy. He proclaims as fulfilled a fact that has just begun and that is waiting its perfect and definite fulfilment soon.**

**The powerful aroused Saviour is the Messiah of the Lord. The Messiah of the Lord is the Son of David. David is servant of the Lord. The Messiah is said to be powerful Saviour as the salvation He will carry on will be truly effective. In this powerful Saviour, all the old prophecies will be fulfilled. All the promises of God will find great, powerful strong realization through the means of Him. All the promises of God have been given to Israel through the means of the holy prophets of the past. The prophets of God have been said as holy. They are holy as they are true prophets. They are prophets who only say the will of the Saint. What had these holy prophets proclaimed?**

**That the Lord would have freed Israel from each of its enemy one day. He would have freed it from all those who hate it. The one who hates man is not man. The one who is the enemy of man is not man. Devil alone hates and is man’s enemy, of each man. Devil is the true man’s enemy and God comes to free us from the devil. Freeing man from devil, God makes a true friend of man. God does not come to free man from man. It would be a useless, vain, infructuous liberation. In this case, man would always be man’s enemy. On the contrary, coming to free ourselves from devil, with this liberation, He makes us friends of men. With the birth of his Messiah, God has made true all his prophets. He has credited them in the truth of each of their word.**

**God is the one who has sworn the promise of blessing to Abraham. God is always the one who has promised a numerous offspring to Abraham. How does Zechariah summarize, filled with Holy Spirit, all the good, great promises of God and each of his oath made to Abraham? God comes to free his people from his enemies. We know who these enemies are: they are devil and sin. God comes to remove the sin of the world, the true enemy of man. He comes to remove sin from the heart of man. He removes it, removing the heart of stone and putting a heart of flesh on its place. Removing sin is only the first of salvation, though. Removing sin is not all the salvation.**

**Without sin, God is served in holiness and justice before him, for all our days. What is the service in holiness and what the service in justice before him? Before him, it means that in the light of his presence that is light of true truth. God’s presence is eternal, light, truth, Law, Commandment, Prescription. We serve the Lord according to his will, to his presence, in his holy fear. Holiness is the total absence of sin in our heart. It is freedom from venial sin, too. It is possession of every virtue. Holiness is full, perfect, charity, most pure and intense love for the Lord. In holiness, one is only of the Lord, one lives only to love Him and in Him to love every other man. Justice is love according to his will, the will He has shown us, the will He shows through his Holy Spirit.**

**Let us read the text of Lk 1,67-79**

**Then Zechariah his father, filled with the holy Spirit, prophesied, saying: "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, for he has visited and brought redemption to his people. He has raised up a horn for our salvation within the house of David his servant, even as he promised through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old: salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us, to show mercy to our fathers and to be mindful of his holy covenant and of the oath he swore to Abraham our father, and to grant us that, rescued from the hand of enemies, without fear we might worship him in holiness and righteousness before him all our days. And you, child, will be called prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give his people knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God by which the daybreak from on high will visit us to shine on those who sit in darkness and death's shadow, to guide our feet into the path of peace."**

**Who is the infant, namely John, in relation to the Messiah who is already present in the world because of his Incarnation already happened? As mission, John has that of being true prophet of the Most High. Jesus will say of him that he is more than a prophet. He is the greatest among those born of women. What will the particular mission of this prophet of the Most High be? That of going before the Lord and prepare the way for Him. John is Jesus’s precursor. He is the prophet who must prepare the heart to receive their Messiah present in the world. But he is also the prophet who must show the world who the true Messiah of the Lord is. John will have to give the people of the Lord the knowledge of salvation, namely he will have to introduce his people into salvation through the preaching of the repentance of sins. The Gospel will reveal that, too. In fact, John preached a baptism of conversion for the remission of sins. With the preaching of John, everyone became aware of his own sins. They repented. They asked God for forgiveness. One sealed his will of conversion and of return to the Lord by immersing oneself, letting oneself be cleansed from his sins in the Jordan River. Saint Luke will reveal all these things in the third Chapter of his Gospel. Zechariah in the Holy Spirit knows who John is and he also knows what his mission is: that the angel had revealed him in the temple of Jerusalem. John is a true prophet. He is the Precursor of the Lord. He is the voice of the one who cries out in the desert to prepare the way to the Lord. John is the prophet who does not see the Messiah with the eyes of faith or of spirit, he sees him with the eyes of flesh and with hands of flesh he touches him as he baptises him in the Jordan River. This privilege, among all the old prophets, has been up to him. Zechariah sees it in the Holy Spirit and he proclaims that with profound truth.**

**The daybreak from on High is the Messiah of God. The Messiah is the true daybreak of life: daybreak of truth, justice, peace, mercy, forgiveness, holiness, charity, piety of all the tender mercy of the Father toward man. This daybreak is not the fruit of merits and of mercy of men. This daybreak is the fruit of tenderness and of mercy of our God. Is there greater tender mercy than that? Is there more supreme mercy than that? For love, God has given his unique Son and has given him from the cross for us. So great is God’s love for us. It is righteous thing that we become aware of this love. We must let ourselves be conquered by this love, take our place in it, live and die in it. The one who is in darkness and in death’s shadow is his entire people, first of all. Each man, too. The Messiah comes to shine on every man, as every man is in darkness and in death’s shadow. The mission of the Messiah of God is together particular and universal, it is for his people and for each people. How does the Messiah of God lead our steps along the way of peace? Leading our heart and our will in the heart and in the will of the Father. Leading every man to the obedience and to the faith for the Gospel. Whoever enters the Gospel enters peace. Whoever walks with the steps of Gospel and in the Gospel walks toward the way of peace. Peace is in the knowledge and in the fulfilment of the entire will of God. May the Mother of the Lord, make us cantors, today, of the great tender mercy of our God.**