**SATURDAY DECEMBER 24 – FOURTH WEEK OF ADVENT [A]**

**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,**

**To enter into the truth of the Canticle of Zechariah, we must necessarily read again what the Angel Gabriel has revealed him in the temple: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, because your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall name him John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the sight of (the) Lord. He will drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will be filled with the holy Spirit even from his mother's womb, and he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. He will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah to turn the hearts of fathers toward children and the disobedient to the understanding of the righteous, to prepare a people fit for the Lord." (Lk 1,8-17). The Lord has decided to send his Messiah, his Saviour, his Redeemer. The Lord has prepared a powerful Salvation for his people. John, his son, filled with Holy Spirit, will have to go before the Lord who comes for the salvation off his people to prepare his way. He will have to preach the conversion so that the people are fit for accepting the Lord who is to come with his salvation. God has sent his powerful Saviour for mercy, for piety, for compassion toward the man created to his image and likeness. In this sending He has showed all his tender mercy, his goodness, his richness of heart and of mind. There is no greater salvation than that, for there is no greater Redeemer than his Son. Indeed, who is the Redeemer and who is the Saviour? He is the Only Begotten Son of the Father who, through the work of the Holy Spirit, was made flesh in the womb of the Vergin Mary. Elizabeth has also confessed that in the Holy Spirit: “And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?” The one who is before her is not the mother of a man, even if great, even if he is the Messiah of the Lord. The one who is before Elizabeth is the Mother of God. The fruit she bears in her womb is the Eternal Word, the Only Begotten Son of the Father. So great is the mercy and the tender mercy of the Father. To save the slave, He has sacrificed his Creator.**

**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."**

**Zechariah proclaims in this hymn of praise the faithfulness of the Lord to each of his Word. He decided to fulfil each of his prophecy to begin from the prophecy uttered in the garden of Eden to the serpent and until the last uttered by the last prophet of the Old Testament. There is no word of the Father that is not fulfilled in Christ Jesus, in his only begotten Son. The fulfilment of every prophecy is not certainly for merit of man, but thanks to the goodness, to the mercy, to the tender mercy, to the eternal love with which the Lord has established to love man. The salvation that Christ Jesus comes to bring to us is true creation of the new man. It has come our by nature from the world of darkness and by nature it entered the kingdom of light. Jesus comes to destroy our nature of darkness and of son and to create the new nature of light, of truth, of righteousness, of peace, in the forgiveness and in the remission of sins. If we do not begin from the new creation that is done in our nature, we understand nothing of the redemption and of the salvation that Christ the Lord has come to bring on our earth. Jesus has not come to enlighten an old nature, nature of sin, of darkness, of wickedness, of foolishness, of evilness. He has come to create the new nature of light, making it become in Him, through the work of the Holy Spirit, participant of the divine nature. This is the great wonder that is accomplished through Christ, in Christ, with Christ, through the work of his Holy Spirit. What is the mission of John the Baptist? Going before the Lord to prepare the hearts so that they accept the Messiah, true Gift of the Father, for the salvation of every man. The new creation is through the faith in Christ. If one does not believe in Christ, man will eternally remain in his nature of sin and from nature of sin he will continue to bear fruits of death. A nature of darkness cannot bear light and a nature of death cannot generate life. This is the most serious mistake in which the disciple of Jesus has fallen: thinking that a nature of death may bear life and a nature of sin may generate light. If the Christian does not rise from this foolishness of death and does not enter the most pure truth of Christ for first, he is darkness and he spreads darkness. He is death and he gives death. The one who is in the darkness cannot give light and who is in death cannot give life. Today the Christian should know that and this is why it is necessary that he rise from his darkness and from his death. Mother of God, make us of true faith in your Son.**