

Monday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2020

Advent, Monday of 3rd week

Reading: Lk.1,45-55

V.50a *"His mercy extends to those who fear him"*

To modern ears this may sound like a limiting qualifier on God's mercy, as if it is somehow valid in a restricted sense only, including some and excluding others. But his completely misses the mark. And why would Mary sing about this?

No, this is about what the Germans would call 'wahrnehmen' (to take as true is) – seeing so as to perceive/receive the truth of a thing. Imagine you are at a party and visible to everyone there, but when you leave you have the sense that nobody really "saw" you nor cared to, the truth of your-being-there was not received but left to pass everyone by. No doubt you would be affected by such a thing.

The relevance of this shows in the case of love. 'Love' is not perceived truly where it is only spoken of or written about and read, but where it is experienced and suffered, and where it is lived in rejoicing and suffering. And only where love is perceived truly will it dwell and flourish. There is no limitedness of love itself here, but a conditionality that goes with the nature of love and necessarily limits what love can be and do in any circumstance.

But so it is with the mercy of God – it is known in its beauty, power and depth, in its healing, restoring, transforming, God-glorifying nature by those who fear him, because it is to them that it 'happens' and to the greatest and truest extent.

Let not the fear of God be taken from us – if we have lost it let us find it again -, because we shall sing in praise of his mercy when we see that Christ brings grace and truth.

*"The law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in the closest relationship with the Father, has made him known."* (Jn.1,17.18)

