



SAINT LOUIS ABBEY



Songs from the Gospel of Luke

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In the song of Mary, which we sing every evening at Vespers, Mary Praises God for his *mercy* which "endures from age to age for all who fear him." The same theme of mercy is found in the song of Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, which we sing every morning at Lauds: "In the tender *compassion* of our God the dawn on high shall break upon us."

Mary praises and rejoices in God her "*savior*," who raises the lowly and humbles the proud. Zechariah too praises God for raising up a "*mighty savior*" who will "save us from our enemies," giving us knowledge and *salvation* by forgiveness of our sins." In a third song, the canticle of Simeon, which is sung at Compline or Night Prayer, Simeon proclaims, "My eyes have seen the *savior* you prepared for all mankind to see."

A third theme in these songs is God's faithfulness to his promises. For Mary, God has been "mindful of his merciful love which he *promised to our fathers* before us, Abraham and his children forever and ever." For Zechariah, God "*promised to show mercy to our fathers* and to remember his holy covenant. This was the *oath he swore* to our father Abraham."

A final theme appears not in Mary's song but in the others. Zechariah proclaims that the dawn from on high will "guide our feet on the road of *peace*." Simeon asks the Lord to let him "go in *peace* according to [his] word." And in the fourth and briefest of these songs from the "Gospel of Luke, sung at Mass on Sundays and feasts, the angels in heaven proclaim to the shepherds at the birth of Christ: "*peace to [God's] people on earth*."

The Church thus puts before us frequently, even daily, the great themes of our Christian faith" the infinite mercy of God for his people, his faithfulness to his promise, our salvation from sin and death, and the universal peace Christ came to establish. Each day as we sing or recite these prayers we are invited to experience these mysteries in our lives anew.

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