

# Remember Zechariah

December 19

O God, who through the child-bearing of the Holy Virgin graciously revealed the radiance of your glory to the world, grant, we pray, that we may venerate with integrity of faith the mystery of so wondrous an Incarnation and always celebrate it with due reverence.

Through our Lord, Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

*Read Luke 1:5-25*

What is your deepest desire? What do you long for the most? What would make you the happiest and would fulfill all your longings and hopes?

There are many things in our life that grab our attention: a spouse, an education, a job, peace at work and at home. Yet we must remember that as Christians our deepest desire must be for Jesus and the life of glory with him in heaven. It is possible we may need to begin to change your priorities. Today we turn the page to the Gospel of St. Luke and hear the announcement to Zechariah and Elizabeth. Zechariah is fulfilling his duty in the temple as a Jew of a priestly cast. As priest he is praying for the coming of the Messiah, as a man he is longing for a son. Both of his prayers are answered.

The Angel bore witness to grace. Zechariah, as priest offering incense is praying for the coming of a Messiah who would be the true sacrificial offering for the world. The angel beside the altar of incense was a herald of a new Covenant. Zechariah in the middle of the sanctuary represented the old covenant that had now been struck silent. Zechariah and Elizabeth are a faithful remnant of Old Israel. They believed and trusted in God. Yet, they were deeply disappointed. He had heard the promise of God but he was convinced now of its impossibility.

Faith means we need a new set of eyes. Faith – the assurances of things unseen. The lights do not go on; the lights go out and we learn how to walk by faith, in the dark. Here in the darkest, coldest time of the year, we begin to sing of a light that never fails. Faith is walking with a certain firmness and strength, even if you don't know where the next step will lead.

Are we a lot like Zechariah? God promises us great things and we think: when? or how? or what? What was his prayer? The promise was given; and Zechariah was not optimistic. There is a basic difference between our optimism and the virtue of hope. Optimism has everything to do with what we might accomplish. I'm optimistic that we may be successful. Hope, on the other hand, is a real confidence in what God is doing, what God is accomplishing. God is given to us in His fullness and we are often unaware of it.

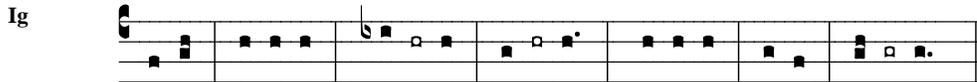
What is the deepest desire of your heart and when it is promised to you, will you hear it? Will you believe it? What is God doing in your life? What is God accomplishing in your life? I'm optimistic that all the gifts will be wrapped and the ingredients purchased for a lovely Christmas and a magnificent dinner. But I am hopeful too. Hopeful too, that we each experience more and more every day what God has, from of old, longed for each of us, wanting to lift us up to Himself. And indeed, in this gracious Mystery, He will accomplish that very thing.

Psalm 71:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 15-17

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My mouth will be filled with your praise, and I will sing your glo-ry.



Be my/---/ **rock** of/ **refuge**, \* a stronghold to/ *give* me/ **safe**-ty,  
---/ for you are my/ **Rock** (and) my/ **for**-tress. \* O, my God, rescue me from  
the hand/ of *the* / **wick**-ed.

For you/---/ **are** my/ **hope**, (O) Lord; \* my trust,/ O God,/ **from** (my) youth.  
--/ On / **you** (I) de-/**pend** (from) birth; \* from my mother's womb/ *you are*/  
**my** strength.

I will/ treat of the mighty/ **works** of/ *the* Lord; \* O God, I will tell of your  
sin-/*gu*-lar / **jus**-tice.  
--/ O God, you have/ **taught** me/ **from** (my) youth, \* and till the present  
I pro-/*claim* your / **won**(drous) deeds.