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Mary goes on pilgrimage today, and in reading that story we feel a little worry; travel is tough in those days and she is pregnant. But she goes on pilgrimage to see what wonders God has done to Elizabeth. The mother of God will make another, more difficult pilgrimage to the town of Bethlehem where the Christ will be born. The first reading tells us why that journey is needed; it is to fulfill the scriptures. The message of fulfillment, of the days of Mary, of the vision of the prophet Micah, of the promise of salvation; all these things are coming to fruition in these days.

So when we proclaim the verses of Psalm 80 today, we do so with the full knowledge that God, too, is ready to make pilgrimage, to send the Christ in to our midst to save us. And so Paul speaks of the body prepared for Christ, the mission of salvation to do God's will.

At the end of Advent, we should be left with the knowledge that God has prepared the world for the mission of Jesus, and that likewise, God has prepared a mission for each of us. For what reason did God prepare a body for each of us? How are we to join Christ in saying, "Behold, I come to do your will"?

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