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**Election for God's Purposes**     First Week of Advent     Monday, December 1, 2014  
**Is 2:1-5; Mt 8:5-11** (A ministry and a missionary role to play in the world)

The first week of Advent begins with the consideration of the role of election in the life of Israel. **Election means that God chose them for a very special role to play.** The sad truth is, however, that they often misunderstood this role or didn't understand it at all, thinking that the election was in the nature of a privilege, that they were a chosen people for their own sake. But that is not what was originally said. **They were a chosen people for God's sake.** Isaiah makes this very clear that Jerusalem had a role to play in the gathering of nations and the promoting of peace, **but very often they did not play this role at all.** They forsook the ministry God gave them and pursued their own plans.

In the story of the centurion we see that a gentile, **a Roman soldier, senses the mission of Jesus and his power in a way that no one else did in Israel.** This is actually a sad story. It's only happy insofar as the centurion and the centurion's servant are blessed. But it's sad in the reflection of **the lack of faith that the chosen ones demonstrated, even in the time of Jesus, but not only then, all the way back.**

So as we begin our Advent season we might also reflect on **the role that the Christian Church has in serving God's purposes,** not in being privileged, possessing a salvation only for them, but **a ministry and a missionary role to play in the world.** And if we are honest, we would have to admit that not necessarily as individuals but that as a Church we are often asleep to this role God has given us.