

DECEMBER 10, 2020
Thursday of the 2nd Week of Advent
Matthew 11: 11-15

“WITNESSES OF THE GOSPEL.”

When we are praised and recognized by someone greater than us, we are so happy and elated. When we are appreciated and acknowledged by someone, our boss, our superior, or even our peers, we take that as a good motivation to continue in what we are doing in life. It is really compelling and exciting to receive that kind of commendation. If we experience that, how much more if it comes from the Lord Himself. “What Jesus says about John the Baptist in today’s gospel is high praise indeed, “of all the children born of women, greater than John the Baptist has never been born.” John is deserving of such praise because, as Jesus says in that reading, he is the prophet whose coming all of the Jewish Scriptures looked forward to. He is the Elijah figure who, it was believed, would immediately precede the coming of the Messiah.”¹ John the Baptist was the great precursor whose aim and purpose in life is to prepare our hearts to hear, accept and receive the message of Jesus amidst difficulties and suffering, even death itself. Living the Gospel corresponds to our own death for Christ, and that’s what the life of John the Baptist. He gave his life for the Messiah.

My brothers and sisters, “God may call some of us to be martyrs for our faith in Jesus Christ. But for most of us our call is to be dry martyrs who bear testimony to the joy of the Gospel in the midst of daily challenges, contradictions, temptations and adversities which come our way as we follow the Lord Jesus. What attracts others to the Gospel of Jesus Christ? When they see Christians loving their enemies, being joyful in suffering, patient in adversity, pardoning injuries, and showing comfort and compassion to the hopeless and the helpless.”² This is the invitation that the season of Advent is calling us to do: the eagerness to be witnesses of the joy and freedom of the Gospel. So, let us be witnesses of God’s goodness for others today and always.

¹ www.associationofcatholicpriests.ie

² *ibid*