

DECEMBER 14, 2019  
Memorial of St. John of the Cross, Priest & Doctor of the Church  
Matthew 17: 10-13

THE WONDERFUL NEWS OF GOD'S LOVE

God reveals and communicates to us in many ways. He uses people around us to convey a message, things happening in our lives to warn us, even our successes, failures, sickness and 'bad things' around us to listen to His works and words.

In our gospel for today, Jesus Christ recognized John the Baptist as the last prophet of the old covenant who became the fingers pointing to Jesus, the essential task of all the prophets. John fulfilled his task to prepare the way for the Lord's coming and showed to others the Savior. During the time of Jesus, Jews were expecting that Elijah would appear to announce the presence of the Messiah when He comes, and John filled the role of Elijah by preparing the way for the coming of Jesus Christ through preaching a baptism of repentance and renewal.

Jesus also pointed out that the experience of John the Baptist would become His own experience: "So also the Son of Man is about to suffer at their hands."<sup>1</sup> They, John and Jesus lived, declared and proclaimed God's kingdom and both of them suffered greatly for doing so.

My brothers and sisters, at the Birth of Jesus on Christmas Day, we celebrate the wonderful news of God's love to the world by giving His only Son. Today we are being reminded that God's giving was a giving-unto-death, a giving that cost not less than everything. During this Season of Advent, we pray for generosity, that we too may give

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 17:12 NRSV Catholic Bible Press USA

to others what God has given to us. And as watchful servants, we are called to turn away from sin and from everything that would keep us away from Him.

Also, as we celebrate the memorial of St. John of the Cross, let us ask his intercession to follow the Lord even in the hardest moment of our lives. “As man-Christian-Carmelite, he experienced in himself this purifying ascent; as spiritual director, he sensed it in others; as psychologist-theologian, he described and analyzed it in his prose writings. His prose works are outstanding in underscoring the cost of discipleship, the path of union with God: rigorous discipline, abandonment, purification. Uniquely and strongly John underlines the gospel paradox: The cross leads to resurrection, agony to ecstasy, darkness to light, abandonment to possession, denial to self to union with God. If you want to save your life, you must lose it. John is truly “of the Cross.” He died at 49—a life short, but full.”<sup>2</sup>

May St. John of the Cross, intercedes for us as we journey this Advent and prepare ourselves for the Birth of Jesus.

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<sup>2</sup> [www.franciscanmedia.org](http://www.franciscanmedia.org)