

DECEMBER 16, 2021
Thursday of the 3rd Week of Advent
Luke 7: 24-30

“SHOUT FOR JOY.”

Prophet Isaiah said 700 years before the coming of Jesus, God would not forget the people of Israel even if they were unfaithful. He compared Israel the bride of God and promised to rebuild them because of God’s unwavering love and His covenant of peace He made with them. Isaiah said in our first reading: “‘Shout for joy, you barren women, who bore no children!’ The Israelites, in exile, are apparently abandoned by their ‘husband’ God. Humanly speaking, they seem to have no future as a people. In the Near East, barrenness was considered a terrible disgrace. Now, however, they can shout for joy. They are going to be fertile again. The passage brings a message of comfort to the Israelites in exile with the promise of Jerusalem’s restoration. The people are called on to prepare for great changes, changes for the better.”¹ We see now through the ministry of St. John the Baptist, the start of this renewal, rebuilding and restoration as he announces the coming of the Savior, the promised One.

In our gospel, “Jesus praised John the Baptist as the greatest person born of woman. What an amazing compliment for a righteous man who had spent most of his life praying in the wilderness before he began to publicly announce the coming of the Messiah. Why did Jesus seem to contradict his compliment of John, with the astounding statement that the least in the kingdom of God would be even greater than John the Baptist (Luke 7:28)? Jesus came to give his people and the whole world something which John the Baptist could not accomplish on his own. What John announced - Jesus fulfilled. John preached a baptism for repentance - turning away from sin and obeying God's word. Jesus came to fulfill God's promise to set people free from slavery to sin, Satan, and death. Through his atoning death on the cross and his rising in glory on the third day, Jesus won

¹ livingspace.sacredspace.ie

for all who would believe in him - full pardon, reconciliation, and adoption as the beloved sons and daughters of the living God.”² God is faithful to His promises, never abandon us, and will always be with us. The only thing that He asks us is to be faithful, loyal and devoted sons and daughters of God.

My brothers and sisters, let us ask the Lord in this Eucharist that He may give us the courage and bravery, boldness and confidence to proclaim and live the message of truth and love of the Gospel to those people around us. May the Lord Jesus, like St. John the Baptist, set us on fire with His transforming love, compassion, mercy and holiness as we continue preparing ourselves this Season of Advent. Let us shout for joy as He, the Lord is coming!

² www.dailyscripture.net