

DECEMBER 5, 2021  
 Sunday of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Week of Advent  
 Luke 3: 1-6

“BE A SOURCE OF JOY.”

“Once upon a time there was a king, who ruled a prosperous country. One day he went for a trip to some distant areas of his country. When he came back to his palace, he complained that his feet were very sore because it was the first time that he went for such a long trip, and the road he went through was very rough and stony. He then ordered his people to cover every road of the country with leather. Definitely this would need skins of thousands of animals, and would cost a huge amount of money. Then one of his wise advisors dared to question the king, ‘Why do you have to spend that unnecessary amount of money? Why don’t you just cut a little piece of leather to cover your feet?’ The king was surprised, but later agreed to his suggestion to make a ‘shoe’ for himself. – We often say, ‘I wish things would change or people would change.’ Instead wise people say: ‘Change your thinking and change your world.’”<sup>1</sup>

If we noticed as we hear the gospel of today, St. Luke mentioned people and places most of us have never heard of. I even tried to pronounce it properly, maybe my pronunciation or accent is wrong. But why Luke mention these? There are two things: he follow the tradition for Jewish and Greek writers of his day and the most important, he presented John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth a really historical persons. They existed in a particular time, season and place, and not a myth or fake story. “Luke is preparing us for the announcement of God coming among us as a human being. He is preparing the stage for this great drama. And so he gives: the exact time this is going to happen, the political situation (Palestine was a colony of the Roman Empire), the religious situation (Annas and Caiaphas were high priests), the place (a small province in the

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<sup>1</sup> stories4homilies.blogspot.com (John Pichappilly in The Table of the Word)

eastern part of the Empire). Any modern history of those times will corroborate the facts that Luke gives.”<sup>2</sup>

Today’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent, St. John the Baptist is introduced to us as one of the prominent, if not the most prominent, personality in the salvation history of mankind. He connected the Old and New Testament, the Old and New Covenant of God to His people. He was the one who pointed out to Jesus as the Lamb of God. He invited everyone to three things: baptism, repentance and forgiveness. “Baptism, of course, is not here the Sacrament of Baptism by which people are incorporated into the Christian community. But it was a sacramental or symbolic action through which people expressed by their immersion in the waters of the River Jordan their desire to have their evil past totally washed away. This washing away would not be effected automatically or magically but only by their repentance. In fact, the term Luke uses is ‘baptism of repentance.’ Repentance is the common translation for the Greek word *metanoia*, which means not just sorrow for past sins but a total and radical change of outlook in our relationship with God and other people. It calls for a radical and genuine renewal and conversion of heart. This *metanoia* or conversion in turn will bring about the forgiveness of sin. The word forgiveness means a release, a letting go, a liberation from the chains of sin and evil. Forgiveness is seen as the dropping off of heavy baggage or burdens (like the space capsule dropping off its booster tanks and soaring off on its own into space). Forgiveness, too, involves a total reconciliation with our God and with all those whom we have hurt or with whom we have come in conflict. It is a healing, a making whole.”<sup>3</sup>

My sisters and brother, this Season of Advent, we are called by St. John the Baptist to hear his voice: ‘Repent and prepare the way of the Lord.’ Let us confront and confess our sins, turn away evil in sincere repentance and accept forgiveness from the Lord. But we also need to forgive those who wronged us in order to be forgiven. Jesus says “For if

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<sup>2</sup> [livingspace.sacredspace.ie](http://livingspace.sacredspace.ie)

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*

you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”<sup>4</sup> We need to release our anger and resentment, forgive others if we want to allow God to heal us and work in our lives.

What will be our response to the call of our readings for today as we prepare to the birth of Jesus in line with St. John’s call of baptism, metanoia and forgiveness? “First, although our own Baptism was something which may have taken place a long time ago, as an infant or as an adult, what happened then has constantly to be renewed. We need to re-affirm our commitment to the Christian community, to the Body of Christ, through which we go to God and through which our God comes to us. Second, we need to open ourselves to further conversion, to an ever deeper change of heart, to a deeper listening to what Jesus is asking of us, ‘Lord, what do you want me to do, to be?’ And, thirdly, we need, because of our commitment to the Body of Christ, to find total reconciliation with God and with all those people who come into our lives.”<sup>5</sup> My sisters and brothers, let us bring hope, love, compassion and peace to others. Let us help people fill their valleys and mountains and make their rocky paths smoother. Let us always give words of affirmation and encouragement, have a cheerful disposition and be real witnesses of Christ’s joy to others because it can make miracles.

Let this be our prayer: “Lord Jesus Christ, may I always hear your call for repentance and conversion. Like St. John the Baptist, may I be instrument of change of heart and bring others closer to you through my good words, deeds and lifestyle. May this Season of Advent be a season of joy and change for me, my family and my community. Amen.”

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<sup>4</sup> Matthew 6: 14-15 Holy Bible NRSVCE Canadian Bible Society

<sup>5</sup> [livingspace.sacredspace.ie](http://livingspace.sacredspace.ie)