

DECEMBER 6, 2020
Second Sunday of Advent
Mark 1: 1-8

“POINTING TO JESUS.”

“This is the busy season for Santa Claus and Kris Kringle. We are all working very hard to be Santa for those we love — or to be good enough for Santa to come down our chimney this Christmas with that perfect gift. We may be someone’s Kris Kringle or “secret Santa” this Christmas: We may have chosen a member of our family or classmate or fellow worker for whom we will try to make this Christmas a little more special and happy. Being Santa or Kris Kringle can be hard but fulfilling work; we can receive as much as we give in our Santa-playing. But every Advent, our Gospel readings center on this strange, austere, humorless character John the Baptizer. The John of the Gospel is no one’s idea of Christmas joy: subsisting on locusts and wild honey, clad in camel hair, haunting a wild riverbank.”¹

In our First Reading, Prophet Isaiah gave us a glimpse of a person who will become a voice in the wilderness, preparing the way of the Lord and herald of the gospel of our salvation through the birth of a Messiah. Isaiah said: “In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.”² This was a promised fulfilled in our midst. This was echo in our gospel for today from St. Mark, the earliest of the Gospels: “See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.’”³ If we really listen to the voice of John the Baptist, we need to have a change of heart, a metanoia, a change of life to prepare for the coming of Jesus. There is no other way, the best way to prepare ourselves this coming Christmas, the call to embrace the meaning of our baptisms, that is, compassion, forgiveness, justice, mercy, generosity, and

¹ www.stories4homilies.co

² Isaiah 40: 3 NRSV Catholic Bible Press USA

³ Mark 1: 3 NRSV Catholic Bible Press USA

love. Let us take this concretely, give and be generous to those people around us. There are a lot of people who don't have any job, help them this Christmas even if we are also struggling. Pray for those who are sick and suffering even if we can not visit them. Forgive those who wronged us even if they don't know they are already forgiven. Love your wife, your husband even if they are sometimes annoying, not showy of their feelings and concern but thinking of you most of the time, or children who mess up and hard-headed sometimes. My brothers and sisters, let us make our lives and other's life happy, contented and wonderful by being patient and understanding, giving our unselfish love, and helping one another to ease the burden of today's situation.

My brothers and sisters, "we happily take on the role of Kris Kringle, but no way do we see ourselves as John the Baptizer. But that is exactly what Advent calls us to be. In our own baptisms we promised to become Baptizers along our own Jordan Rivers. So let's take on the work of the "Baptizer" this Christmas; let's become heralds like John as we go about our holiday preparations: May we give the gifts of "comfort" and joy . . . may every kindness and generosity we extend this Christmas mirror Christ's presence in our midst . . . may we joyfully take on the hard work of creating a highway through the rugged lands of estrangement and alienation . . . may the gifts and greetings and hospitality we extend proclaim the good news that God's compassion has dawned. This Christmas, let us take up John's Advent work: to straighten the crooked roads of our lives, to transform 'deserts' barren of love into places of welcome and reconciliation, to gather up the lost and forgotten, to proclaim the coming of God's Christ in our midst."⁴

Let this be our prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, may your light burn brightly in my heart that I may be your instrument of hope and strength for others. Empower me to be your witness to the truth of the Gospel and to point others to you, my Lord, and my God like what St. John the Baptist did. Amen."

⁴ www.stories4homilies.co