

DECEMBER 8, 2019
Sunday of the 2nd Week of Advent
Matthew 3: 1-12

PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD

On our Second Sunday of the Season of Advent, the gospel introduces us to St. John the Baptist. Who is John the Baptist? He appeared first as the son of Zechariah and Elizabeth in the Gospel of Luke when an angel appeared to Zechariah that they will have a son out of their old age: “Do not be afraid Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son and you will name him John. You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord.”¹ And during the visitation of Mary, Elizabeth proclaimed: “Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb. For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy.”²

John the Baptist prepared the way of the Lord so that people of his time may understand the good news of the salvation brought about by the coming of the Messiah. According to St. John Paul II: “His name is John” (Lk 1:63)... which in Hebrew means “God is benevolent”. God is benevolent to human beings: he wants them to live; he wants them to be saved. God is benevolent to his people: he wants to make of them a blessing for all the nations of the earth. God is benevolent to humanity: he guides its pilgrim way towards the land where peace and justice reign. All this is contained in that name: John!”³

My dear brothers and sisters, God uses people for us to hear God’s loving message. He used John the Baptist to become the precursor and forerunner of the Messiah, the one who was the messenger of salvation, the voice in the wilderness crying out: “Make

¹ Luke 1:13-14 NRSV Catholic Bible Press USA

² Luke 1:42, 44NRSV Catholic Bible Press USA

³ <https://tomperna.org>. Quotes from Pope St. John Paul II given at Kyiv, Ukraine on June 24, 2001

straight the way of the Lord.”⁴ God normally works by sending the message of salvation to us through each other. John the Baptist did not only baptise Our Lord, but he also helped some of his own followers to be with Jesus. He sent Andrew and his brother Peter, and Philip and Nathanael to become the first apostles of Jesus.

God wishes us also to help other people to know, serve and love Him. Parents, you have the first opportunity to point to your children God’s merciful and forgiving love. But our words will only be effective when it is backed up by the good example of our own faith and prayer. Let us be a good example to our children. Be patient and understanding, merciful and forgiving to your children and even to your wife or your husband. We can influence them by living and sharing what we profess.

Pope John Paul II said: “You, dear parents, prepare the way of the Lord before your children. Bring them up with love and set a good example by living the principles you teach.”⁵

That must also be our goal with other people. Let us use any kind of influence whether in the media, press, radio, television and through internet and social media. Let us influence them by our way of speaking and behaving in any way that can help others to find God through us. Let us put God in the social media. Don’t be ashamed or afraid to be identified as good Catholic by posting God’s Word. Don’t just post the food that you ate in the restaurant, your places that you went to or your selfie photos. Share also the gospel of love and joy that you experienced with the loving God. Do not be afraid that you are Christ’s messenger.

⁴ John 1:23 NRSV Catholic Bible Press USA

⁵ <https://tomperna.org>. Quotes from Pope St. John Paul II given at Kyiv, Ukraine on June 24, 2001

My dear brothers and sisters, Jesus Christ our Lord Jesus gives us the fire of His love and Spirit for us to radiate the joy and truth of the Gospel to our world who is in desperate need of God's light, understanding, love and truth. He has the power to transform our lives so that we can be instruments to point others to Christ. Like St. John the Baptist, we too are asked and called to give testimony to Jesus Christ. So, let us ask ourselves, do I point others to Christ in the way I live, work, and speak?

Let this be our prayer: "My Lord, may your love and light burn brightly in my heart and empower me to witness the truth and joy of your Gospel and to point others to Jesus Christ. Give me strength and use me to show how You love and care Your people. Amen."