

## January 2nd (Weekdays of the Christmas season)

**Gospel text (Jn 1,19-28):** This was the testimony of John when the Jews sent priests and Levites to ask him, «Who are you?». John recognized the truth and did not deny it. He said, «I am not the Messiah». And they asked him, «Then who are you? Elijah?». He answered, «I am not». They said, «Are you the Prophet?». And he answered, «No». Then they said to him, «Tell us who you are, so that we can give some answer to those who sent us. How do you see yourself?». And John said, quoting the prophet Isaiah, «I am the voice crying out in the wilderness: Make straight the way of the Lord».

Those who had been sent were Pharisees; so they put a further question to John: «Then why are you baptizing if you are not the Messiah, or Elijah, or the Prophet?». John answered, «I baptize you with water, but among you stands one whom you do not know; although he comes after me, I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandal». This happened in Bethabara beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

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*«Among you stands one whom you do not know; although he comes after me»*

Mons. Romà CASANOVA i Casanova Bishop of Vic

*(Barcelona, Spain)*

Today, in the Gospel of the Eucharist liturgy, we read the testimony of John the Baptist. The text preceding these words in St. John's Gospel is the prologue where it is clearly affirmed: «And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us» (Jn 1:14). What was announced in the prologue —as a great prelude— is now, step

by step, manifested in the Gospel. The mystery of the Incarnated Verb is the mystery of salvation for mankind: «Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ» (Jn 1:17). Salvation comes through Jesus Christ, and faith is the answer to the manifestation of Christ. Whoever believes in Him is saved.

The mystery of salvation in Christ is accompanied always by the testimony. Jesus Christ himself is «The Amen, the faithful and true witness» (Rev 3:14). It is John the Baptist who bears witness with his vision and gaze as a prophet: «Among you stands one who (...) comes after me» (Jn 1:26-27). And this is how the Apostles understand their mission: «God raised this Jesus; of this we are all witnesses» (Acts 2:32).

The whole Church, and therefore all its members, have the mission of bearing witness. The testimony we bring to the world has a name. Jesus Christ is the very Gospel. He is the “Good News”. And the proclamation of the Gospel all over the world must also be understood as the key of the testimony uniting inseparably the announcement and the life. It is good to remember the words from Pope Paul VI: «Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses rather than to teachers and if he does listen to teachers it is because they are witnesses».

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***«I am the voice crying out in the wilderness: Make straight the way of the Lord»***

Fr. Joan COSTA i Bou

*(Barcelona, Spain)*

Today, the Gospel proposes that we contemplate John the Baptist's figure. «Then who are you?» —the priests and Levites ask him. John's answer makes it clear that he is conscious of his mission: to prepare the Messiah's coming. John answers: «I am the voice crying out in the wilderness: Make straight the way of the Lord» (Jn 1:23). To be Christ's voice, His loudspeaker, the person who announces the Savior of the world and the one who prepares His coming: this is John's mission and, just like him, the mission of all the people who know and feel themselves keepers of the treasure of our Faith.

Every divine mission has a vocation —also divine— as a foundation, which guarantees its fulfillment. «Since God began such a good work in you —Saint Paul told the Philippians—: I am certain that he will complete it in the day of Christ Jesus» (Phil 1:6). We all, called to holiness by Christ, have to become His voice in the middle of the world. A world that often lives, with its back turned to God,

**lacking in love for man. It is necessary that we make Him present and make Him known with the example of our lives and our words. Not to do it, would be to betray our vocation and mission. «The Christian vocation, due to its very same nature, is also a vocation for apostolate»— the Council Vatican II states.**

**The greatness of our vocation and of the mission that God has assigned us does not come from our own merit, but from the One who we all serve. Thus spoke John the Baptist: «I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandal» (Jn 1:27). How God entrusts his people!**

**With all our hearts, we are grateful for the call to share the divine life and the mission of being His hands in our world, as well as being Christ's voice, His heart and eyes. Let's renew our sincere desire to be faithful.**