

Sunday 3rd (B) of Advent

Gospel text (Jn 1,6-8.19-28): A man came, sent by God; his name was John. He came to bear witness, as a witness to introduce the Light so that all might believe through him. He was not the Light but a witness to introduce the Light. 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.

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

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**Today, right in the midst of Advent, we receive an invitation to joy and hope:
«Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks» (1Thess**

5:16-18). The Lord is near: «My daughter, know your heart is Heaven for Me», Jesus said to St. Faustina Kowalska (and, certainly, the Lord would like to extend it to each one of his children). It is a good time to think of everything He has done for us and thank Him for it.

Joy is an essential characteristic of the life of Faith. To feel loved and saved by God is a great elation; to feel conscious we are brothers of Jesus Christ, who gave his life for us, is the basic motivation of our Christian joy. A Christian who surrenders to grief and sadness will have nothing but a bleak and desolated spiritual life, he will not be able to see what God has done for him and, therefore, he will not be able to transmit it to others. Christian happiness stems from thanksgiving, basically because of the Love our Lord radiates over us; every Sunday, through the Eucharist, we do so in communion with Christ.

The Gospel has introduced us to the figure of John the Baptist, the precursor. John enjoyed great popularity amid plain people; but, when they ask him, he humbly answers: «I am not the Messiah...» (cf. Jn 1:21); «I baptize you with water, but among you stands one whom you do not know; although he comes after me» (Jn 1:26-27). Jesus Christ is the long-awaited Messiah; He is the Light of the world. The Gospel is not a strange message, nor another doctrine, but The Word that bestows meaning upon our human life, for it has been communicated by the eternal God incarnated as a man. All Christians are called to acknowledge Jesus Christ and bear witness of his Faith. As Christ's disciples, we are called to contribute with the gift of Light. Beyond the scope of these words, the best testimony, is and will always be the example of a faithful life.