

# From the PASTOR'S DESK

## The Trouble with You

The trouble with you ... may be the opening words of a sentence we have heard once or twice in our lives. Usually, very little, or no, practical advice is attached to the statement. It is spoken more in the nature of a complaint than an attempt to help improve the trouble.

Not so with John the Baptist. He not only tells people that they need to improve, but he also tells them how to do it.

The Gospels are unanimous that John the Baptist marks the end of one era and the beginning of another. The waiting is over. The kingdom of heaven is at hand. After a long silence, John the Baptist appears as the last of the great prophets.

The people of Israel lamented the silence that had existed for so many years. They had been without a messenger for a long time but now could clearly see in the Baptist an end to God's silence.

John lived in the desert, outside and away from cities and towns. This was fitting. It was in the desert that Israel first met God. Israel's whole story as a people, their growth as a nation was influenced by God's actions in their wanderings through the desert. They were tested in the desert, and later, when they failed God, they were told they would be taken back to the desert where God would speak again to their hearts.

John baptizes those who have decided to change their lives, those who make a public profession to do so. He is calling everyone to change. He is warning of consequences.

A change of heart: Everyone needs it, everyone is called to it. Each of us has the responsibility for the here and now, of seeing what needs to be changed in our lives and then doing something about it. Jesus is ready to offer all the help we will need to become better people, if we are willing to turn to Him. First, we need to become more faithful to our baptismal dignity as Christians. Then we need to allow ourselves to be challenged by the Word of God. To hear the Word of God and act on it.

The trouble with us is conquered by Jesus and our commitment to His way of life.

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