



Some reflections inspired by online copyrighted commentaries and homilies

## **December 4, 2022      Second Sunday in Advent**

John the Baptist is one of the central figures of Advent. Today's Gospel defines his role. He is to prepare the way of the Lord. But how does John prepare the way of the Lord? We might think that he does this simply by announcing that Jesus is coming. But I think his role is much deeper than that. John's ministry is not about information. It is about realization. He is not only telling us about Jesus, but also preparing us so that we will be able to receive Jesus. John the Baptist preached repentance because he wanted his listeners to change, to empty themselves of pride and self-sufficiency. John knew that it is only if they found their emptiness that they would have room to receive Jesus. John the Baptist wants to inform us also. He calls us to own our needs and our weakness, because John understands that it is only when we find our own emptiness that we will understand why we faithfully wait for Christ.

I believe that most of us have strong relationships in our family and with our friends and feel secure in those relationships. However, John the Baptist asks us to speak to the broken relationships in our lives, the person, or persons who we have hurt or who has hurt us. We know that these relationships should be healed, but somehow, we cannot find the energy or have the desire to do so. That recognition of our inability to make things right reminds us of why we wait for Jesus. Why we take this time during advent to prepare ourselves to receive Christ. We are blessed to live in this country that has a great medical system, maybe the finest in the world. Yet we know that twenty-eight million Americans do not have adequate access to health care. This is not as it should be. But we see how economics, politics, selfishness, greed, and the lack of will to do something different, prevents us from coming to a solution that is sufficient for everyone. John the Baptist wants us to own that unresponsiveness, because it reminds us that we need the Spirit of God to guide us.

Today's gospel invites us to adopt the formation of John the Baptist. But it is important that we embrace all our tribulations. Are you discouraged? Are you hurt? Are you grieving? Then, name it, claim it, swallow it down, as John did with the locusts and honey. Say to God, yes, this is the person that I am, this is the person I want to be. Then turn to the sweetness of God's presence, for it is that presence that we will find courage to heal ourselves. When evil strikes us, do not deny it, do not run away. Like John the Baptist eating locusts, take it in. Then be sure to mix it with your faith. Loss and pain cannot be carried without God's presence. Locusts cannot be digested without the honey of God's word. "Come Lord Jesus Come".

Jesus is coming. John the Baptist wants us to own our weakness and our need. To do so is a necessary action of Advent, because it is only by finding the emptiness in our lives, in our world, in our church, that we will have room to let Jesus in.

Reflection inspired by Fr. George Smiga