

SUNDAY GOSPEL BIBLE SHARING



Wednesday Dec 4, for the 2nd Sunday in Advent

OPENING PRAYER: Loving God, we thank you for gathering us together to share your Word. Help us to humbly welcome your Word that you have planted in our hearts. Help us also to be doers of your Word. This we pray through Christ our Lord. Amen.

- In the words of Saint Benedict, “Listen with the ears of your heart.”
- Please note a word, phrase, or verse that seemed to really catch your notice.
- A volunteer slowly read aloud today’s passage Afterwards, we have a few minutes of silent reflection.

READING OF THE ASSIGNED GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

Luke 3:1-6

The Preaching of John the Baptist.*

1 In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar,* when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea,^a and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Iturea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene,

2 during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas,* the word of God came to John^b the son of Zechariah in the desert.

3* He went throughout [the] whole region of the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins,^c

4* as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah:^d

“A voice of one crying out in the desert:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,^e

make straight his paths.

5 Every valley shall be filled
and every mountain and hill shall be made low.
The winding roads shall be made straight,
and the rough ways made smooth,
6 and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”^f

Notes

* [3:1–20] Although Luke is indebted in this section to his sources, the Gospel of Mark and a collection of sayings of John the Baptist, he has clearly marked this introduction to the ministry of Jesus with his own individual style. Just as the gospel began with a long periodic sentence (Lk 1:1–4), so too this section (Lk 3:1–2). He casts the call of John the Baptist in the form of an Old Testament prophetic call (Lk 3:2) and extends the quotation from Isaiah found in Mk 1:3 (Is 40:3) by the addition of Is 40:4–5 in Lk 3:5–6. In doing so, he presents his theme of the universality of salvation, which he has announced earlier in the words of Simeon (Lk 2:30–32). Moreover, in describing the expectation of the people (Lk 3:15), Luke is characterizing the time of John’s preaching in the same way as he had earlier described the situation of other devout Israelites in the infancy narrative (Lk 2:25–26, 37–38). In Lk 3:7–18 Luke presents the preaching of John the Baptist who urges the crowds to reform in view of the coming wrath (Lk 3:7, 9: eschatological preaching), and who offers the crowds certain standards for reforming social conduct (Lk 3:10–14: ethical preaching), and who announces to the crowds the coming of one mightier than he (Lk 3:15–18: messianic preaching).

* [3:1] Tiberius Caesar: Tiberius succeeded Augustus as emperor in A.D. 14 and reigned until A.D. 37. The fifteenth year of his reign, depending on the method of calculating his first regnal year, would have fallen between A.D. 27 and 29. Pontius Pilate: prefect of Judea from A.D. 26 to 36. The Jewish historian Josephus describes him as a greedy and ruthless prefect who had little regard for the local Jewish population and their religious practices (see Lk 13:1). Herod: i.e., Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the Great. He

ruled over Galilee and Perea from 4 B.C. to A.D. 39. His official title tetrarch means literally, “ruler of a quarter,” but came to designate any subordinate prince. Philip: also a son of Herod the Great, tetrarch of the territory to the north and east of the Sea of Galilee from 4 B.C. to A.D. 34. Only two small areas of this territory are mentioned by Luke. Lysanias: nothing is known about this Lysanias who is said here to have been tetrarch of Abilene, a territory northwest of Damascus.

* [3:2] During the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas: after situating the call of John the Baptist in terms of the civil rulers of the period, Luke now mentions the religious leadership of Palestine (see note on Lk 1:5). Annas had been high priest A.D. 6–15. After being deposed by the Romans in A.D. 15 he was succeeded by various members of his family and eventually by his son-in-law, Caiaphas, who was high priest A.D. 18–36. Luke refers to Annas as high priest at this time (but see Jn 18:13, 19), possibly because of the continuing influence of Annas or because the title continued to be used for the ex-high priest. The word of God came to John: Luke is alone among the New Testament writers in associating the preaching of John with a call from God. Luke is thereby identifying John with the prophets whose ministries began with similar calls. In Lk 7:26 John will be described as “more than a prophet”; he is also the precursor of Jesus (Lk 7:27), a transitional figure inaugurating the period of the fulfillment of prophecy and promise.

* [3:3] See note on Mt 3:2.

* [3:4] The Essenes from Qumran used the same passage to explain why their community was in the desert studying and observing the law and the prophets (1QS 8:12–15).

QUESTIONS FOR SHARING

1. Who are the John the Baptists in our world or in your life today? Who are those people who point you by word or deed to Jesus and his ways?
2. Name one or more voices that are crying out in the wilderness today—prophetic voices that are not being heard—and share how you can respond. Example: voices on protection of the environment and the life of the unborn child.
3. Name one thing today's Gospel says to us that we disciples of Jesus need to heed and act on.

Commentary

Luke places John's call in a historical context by naming certain places and personalities. Some of these personalities will oppose Jesus and his ministry. John's call comes to him in the desert, the place where God formed and purified Israel many centuries earlier. He then proclaims "a baptism of repentance" which will lead to forgiveness of sins. True repentance involves a complete change of heart, a turning away from sinful attitudes and behaviors and a turning toward God and his ways. This change of heart is symbolized by a ritual cleansing in the waters of the Jordan. The confession of sin leads to forgiveness of sin. John uses the words of an earlier prophet, Isaiah, to challenge the people. Commenting on the words of Isaiah, Scripture scholar Patricia Sanchez says: "Mountains" of egoism should be leveled. "Hills" of preconceived ideas as to who and what the Savior should be and do must yield in order to welcome the unexpected surprises of God. "Crooked," "winding," and manipulating attitudes and behavior must bow to the truth of God's ways.

IS THERE A CAUSE FOR GRATITUDE THIS WEEK?

IS THERE A PRAYER REQUEST YOU HAVE?

CLOSING PRAYER - The Lord's Prayer

Bible Sharing Parish Hall and Zoom

Wednesday, Dec 4 6:30 – 7:30pm
Weekly on Wednesday
Zoom Meeting

Description: Blessed Sacrament is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Blessed Sacrament's Zoom Meeting
Time: Dec 4, 2024 06:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Please download and import the following iCalendar (.ics) files to your calendar system.

Weekly: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/tZolduisqDosEg23wHRoszXqNBSkCL57ORPg/ics?icsToken=98tyKuGhpjorHtKTthCORpx5Goj4d-jwpiFdj_oPzwjNMS9AeDvnGMBxOZFTRY

Blessed Sacrament is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85136740699?pwd=Q2pXLzdzZFdNNU1NajVpeEtKUohJQT09>

Meeting ID: 811 6265 5618
Passcode: 280607