

Wednesday Dec 13th, for the 3rd Sunday in Advent

OPENING PRAYER: Heavenly Father, thank You for the witness of Your Word, and thank You for sending Jesus into the world to be the Light of the world and Savior of mankind. Help us to walk in the light as He is in the light and to let the light of His love shine through us to others so that our lives would be a true testimony to Jesus. And just as John the Baptist prayed, as he bore witness to Jesus, we pray that We may decrease and Jesus may increase, until He is all in all in our life. This We ask in Jesus' name, Amen.

READING OF THE ASSIGNED GOSPEL

- 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.

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Mark

Gospel John 1:6-8 and 19-28

6* A man named John was sent from God.^e

7 He came for testimony,* to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him.^f

8 He was not the light, but came to testify to the light.^g

9 The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.^h

10 He was in the world, and the world came to be through him, but the world did not know him.

11 He came to what was his own, but his own people* did not accept him.

12ⁱ But to those who did accept him he gave power to become children of God, to those who believe in his name,

13ⁱ who were born not by natural generation nor by human choice nor by a man's decision but of God.

14 And the Word became flesh*and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth.^k

15* John testified to him and cried out, saying, "This was he of whom I said,^l "The one who is coming after me ranks ahead of me because he existed before me.""

16 From his fullness we have all received, grace in place of grace,*

17 because while the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.^m

18 No one has ever seen God. The only Son, God,* who is at the Father's side, has revealed him.ⁿ

19* And this is the testimony of John. When the Jews* from Jerusalem sent priests and Levites [to him] to ask him, "Who are you?"

20* he admitted and did not deny it, but admitted,^o "I am not the Messiah."

21 So they asked him, "What are you then? Are you Elijah?"* And he said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" He answered, "No."^p

22 So they said to him, "Who are you, so we can give an answer to those who sent us? What do you have to say for yourself?"

23 He said: "I am 'the voice of one crying out in the desert,^q "Make straight the way of the Lord,""*as Isaiah the prophet said."

24 Some Pharisees* were also sent.

25 They asked him, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Messiah or Elijah or the Prophet?"^r

26 John answered them, "I baptize with water,* but there is one among you whom you do not recognize,^s

27 the one who is coming after me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to untie."

28 This happened in Bethany across the Jordan,* where John was baptizing.

Notes:

* [1:6] John was sent just as Jesus was "sent" (Jn 4:34) in divine mission. Other references to John the Baptist in this gospel emphasize the differences between them and John's subordinate role.

* [1:7] Testimony: the testimony theme of John is introduced, which portrays Jesus as if on trial throughout his ministry. All testify to Jesus: John the

Baptist, the Samaritan woman, scripture, his works, the crowds, the Spirit, and his disciples.

* [\[1:11\]](#) What was his own...his own people: first a neuter, literally, “his own property/possession” (probably = Israel), then a masculine, “his own people” (the Israelites).

* [\[1:13\]](#) Believers in Jesus become children of God not through any of the three natural causes mentioned but through God who is the immediate cause of the new spiritual life. Were born: the Greek verb can mean “begotten” (by a male) or “born” (from a female or of parents). The variant “he who was begotten,” asserting Jesus’ virginal conception, is weakly attested in Old Latin and Syriac versions.

* [\[1:14\]](#) Flesh: the whole person, used probably against docetic tendencies (cf. [1 Jn 4:2](#); [2 Jn 7](#)). Made his dwelling: literally, “pitched his tent/tabernacle.” Cf. the tabernacle or tent of meeting that was the place of God’s presence among his people ([Ex 25:8–9](#)). The incarnate Word is the new mode of God’s presence among his people. The Greek verb has the same consonants as the Aramaic word for God’s presence (Shekinah). Glory: God’s visible manifestation of majesty in power, which once filled the tabernacle ([Ex 40:34](#)) and the temple ([1 Kgs 8:10–11, 27](#)), is now centered in Jesus. Only Son: Greek, *monogenēs*, but see note on [Jn 1:18](#). Grace and truth: these words may represent two Old Testament terms describing Yahweh in covenant relationship with Israel (cf. [Ex 34:6](#)), thus God’s “love” and “fidelity.” The Word shares Yahweh’s covenant qualities.

* [\[1:15\]](#) This verse, interrupting [Jn 1:14, 16](#) seems drawn from [Jn 1:30](#).

* [\[1:16\]](#) Grace in place of grace: replacement of the Old Covenant with the New (cf. [Jn 1:17](#)). Other possible translations are “grace upon grace” (accumulation) and “grace for grace” (correspondence).

* [\[1:18\]](#) The only Son, God: while the vast majority of later textual witnesses have another reading, “the Son, the only one” or “the only Son,” the translation above follows the best and earliest manuscripts, *monogenēs theos*, but takes the first term to mean not just “Only One” but to include a filial relationship with the Father, as at [Lk 9:38](#) (“only child”) or [Heb 11:17](#) (“only son”) and as translated at [Jn 1:14](#). The Logos is thus “only Son” and God but not Father/God.

* [\[1:19–51\]](#) The testimony of John the Baptist about the Messiah and Jesus’ self-revelation to the first disciples. This section constitutes the introduction to the gospel proper and is connected with the prose inserts in the prologue. It develops the major theme of testimony in four scenes: John’s negative

testimony about himself; his positive testimony about Jesus; the revelation of Jesus to Andrew and Peter; the revelation of Jesus to Philip and Nathanael.

* [\[1:19\]](#) The Jews: throughout most of the gospel, the “Jews” does not refer to the Jewish people as such but to the hostile authorities, both Pharisees and Sadducees, particularly in Jerusalem, who refuse to believe in Jesus. The usage reflects the atmosphere, at the end of the first century, of polemics between church and synagogue, or possibly it refers to Jews as representative of a hostile world ([Jn 1:10–11](#)).

* [\[1:20\]](#) Messiah: the anointed agent of Yahweh, usually considered to be of Davidic descent. See further the note on [Jn 1:41](#).

* [\[1:21\]](#) Elijah: the Baptist did not claim to be Elijah returned to earth (cf. [Mal 3:19](#); [Mt 11:14](#)). The Prophet: probably the prophet like Moses ([Dt 18:15](#); cf. [Acts 3:22](#)).

* [\[1:23\]](#) This is a repunctuation and reinterpretation (as in the synoptic gospels and Septuagint) of the Hebrew text of [Is 40:3](#) which reads, “A voice cries out: In the desert prepare the way of the Lord.”

* [\[1:24\]](#) Some Pharisees: other translations, such as “Now they had been sent from the Pharisees,” misunderstand the grammatical construction. This is a different group from that in [Jn 1:19](#); the priests and Levites would have been Sadducees, not Pharisees.

* [\[1:26\]](#) I baptize with water: the synoptics add “but he will baptize you with the holy Spirit” ([Mk 1:8](#)) or “...holy Spirit and fire” ([Mt 3:11](#); [Lk 3:16](#)). John’s emphasis is on purification and preparation for a better baptism.

* [\[1:28\]](#) Bethany across the Jordan: site unknown. Another reading is “Bethabara.”

* [\[1:29\]](#) The Lamb of God: the background for this title may be the victorious apocalyptic lamb who would destroy evil in the world ([Rev 5–7](#); [17:14](#)); the paschal lamb, whose blood saved Israel ([Ex 12](#)); and/or the suffering servant led like a lamb to the slaughter as a sin-offering ([Is 53:7, 10](#)).

QUESTIONS FOR SHARING

- 1 When we received Christ, what is one thing that changed about us?
- 2 What are some reasons that people don’t seem to recognize God’s work in the world?
- 3 Like John the Baptist, was there a person in your life that pointed you to Jesus?

4 Do you think it was easier to follow Jesus 2,000 years ago or now? Why?

Commentary

The opening verses of the Gospel of John bear witness to the uniqueness of Jesus' identity: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. This one was in the beginning with God" (1:1-2). Jesus is God; Jesus is the Word. These identities are inseparable, and John is the first human witness to this unique relationship of the Father and the Son.

When we meet John in this gospel, we immediately see it is not by happenstance that he will play out his role as the first one to identify Jesus as the Son of God: "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John" (1:6). God has chosen John and commissioned his role as a witness to Jesus.

John's witness transcends all of time as he bears witness to the light that has come into a darkened world: "He (John) came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world" (1:7-9). John's role as witness and Jesus' role as light are inseparable.

When asked about his identity, John replied that he was not the Messiah, or a prophet announcing the Messiah, or one such as Elijah, or the prophet, Moses (1:19-21). Rather, John identifies himself as the prophetic voice of one such as the figure of Isaiah whose role in the sixth century before Christ announced the return of God's people from their years of captivity in Babylon: "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord'" (1:22-23, citing Isaiah 40:3).

John's role is to make straight the way to the one who comes as the Messiah, and he does this through his identity in the role given him by God. He is simply the witness to the one whom God has sent.

In the Gospel of John, John is the first person in this gospel to bear witness and confess that Jesus is "the Son of God" (1:34). This confession is heard from a human witness not until the very end of the Gospel of Mark when we hear the confession of the centurion standing at the foot of the cross as Jesus has breathed his last: "Truly this man was God's Son!" (Mark 15:39).

The role of John continues to unfold in the Gospel of John in 3:22-30; 5:31-35; 10:40-42. In these ongoing texts, it is always clear that John's role is one of the primary witness to Jesus. John is identified as "the friend of the bridegroom" who rejoices in the presence of the bridegroom and announces: "He must increase, but I must decrease" (3:29-30). Jesus identifies the role of John: "He was a burning and shining Lamp, and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light" (5:35). Finally, many who witnessed John's ministry of witness to the Messiah offer their highest commendation of his God-given role: "John performed no sign, but everything he said about [Jesus] was true" (10:41). His role was now complete as the evangelist John offers the final witness to the role of John: "And many believed in him [across the Jordan]" (10:42).

On this Third Sunday of Advent in Year B, we have a unique opportunity to identify the role that all persons of faith are called to by God. Each one of us who has heard the words of this text have seen the importance of John's witness to Jesus. Like John, God commissions us to bear witness to the Messiah, Jesus Christ, the one who has come in the flesh, the one who is here with us, and the one who will come again in his reign as Lord of all.

In this, there is no greater witness to the truth of God's work of salvation.

IS THERE A CAUSE FOR GRATITUDE THIS WEEK?

IS THERE A PRAYER REQUEST YOU HAVE?

CLOSING PRAYER - The Lord's Prayer

Bible Sharing Room 5 and Zoom

Wednesday, Dec 13 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 13, 2023 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/tZIkD-qgrj8qG9Rt4LoXWaku9w9Mo6AzLDCs/ics?icsToken=98tyKuGupzspEtSRsBiHRpwAHYigbzziClfjfpviEvJDBhkYwjjbUbH7opMcL8>

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86903804010?pwd=MGJydS9qSW9LSzNGblZSM2xZcWpGZz09>

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Passcode: 086586

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