

Taking Our Hearts to the Lord

Scripture Sharing Group Resource, Advent 2014, Week 2.

Reader 1: A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Mark (Mk 1:1-8)

Make his paths straight.

The beginning of the Good News about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It is written in the book of the prophet Isaiah:

“Look, I am going to send my messenger before you;

he will prepare your way.

A voice cries in the wilderness:

Prepare a way for the Lord,

make his paths straight,

and so it was that John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. All Judaea and all the people of Jerusalem made their way to him, and as they were baptised by him in the river Jordan they confessed their sins. John wore a garment of camel-skin, and he lived on locusts and wild honey. In the course of his preaching he said, “Someone is following me, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to kneel down and undo the strap of his sandals. I have baptised you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Silence

Leader: Let us read the Gospel passage aloud together.

Everyone: A Reading from the Holy Gospel

Silence

Leader: Let us listen to a short reflection on this Gospel passage.

Reader 2: Reflection on the Gospel

Today's gospel opens with the words 'The beginning'. What do these words evoke for you? Beginnings carry freshness, vitality and promise. There is something deep in us that 'insists that we forever begin'.

(Brendan Kennelly)

These two words, relate to the first words of Genesis, "In the beginning" when God's creative life-giving Spirit hovered over the empty void to bring forth life. That same Spirit, hovering over Mary's womb brings forth the new creation, 'Jesus Christ, Son of God'. There is an icon in a monastery in Sinai showing Christ in such a way that one side of his face shows forth his humanity, while the other depicts his divinity.

The figure of John the Baptist with his unconventional dress and diet looms large in this gospel. He is the preparer, the messenger, the proclaimer of repentance, the preacher, the wilderness prophet, but one who has a clear sense of his own identity and his relationship to Jesus the 'one who will baptise you with the Holy Spirit'.

Can we 'Go back to the very beginning' as the song says and pray that this Advent will open us further, to the mystery of the identity of 'Jesus Christ, Son of God' and the good news that He brings?

Silence

Leader: I invite you to share any thought or consideration prompted by the Gospel passage and /or the reflection.

Sharing

Leader: Let us return to our Advent Prayer.

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