

Taking Our Hearts to the Lord

Scripture Sharing Group Resource, Advent 2014, Week 3

Reader 1: A reading from the holy Gospel according to John (Jn 1:6-8,19-28)

There stands among you, unknown to you, the one who is coming after me.

A man came, sent by God. His name was John. He came as a witness, as a witness to speak for the light, so that everyone might believe through him. He was not the light, only a witness to speak for the light.

This is how John appeared as a witness. When the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" he not only declared, but declared quite openly, "I am not the Christ". "Well then", they asked "are you Elijah?" "I am not" he said. "Are you the prophet?" He answered "No". So they said to him "Who are you? We must take back an answer to those who sent us. What have you to say about yourself?" So John said, "I am as Isaiah prophesised:

a voice that cries in the wilderness: Make a straight path for the Lord.

Now these men had been sent by the Pharisees, and they put this further question to him, "Why are you baptising if you are not the Christ, and not Elijah and not the prophet?" John replied, "I baptise with water; but there stands among you – unknown to you – the one who is coming after me; and I am not fit to undo this sandal-strap". This happened at Bethany, on the far side of the Jordan, where John was baptising.

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

Next Sunday's Mass invites us to prepare to celebrate with joy the birth among us of the Son of God. The witness of John the Baptist is given to help us.

When John the Evangelist wrote his gospel at the end of the first century, he and his community were suffering persecution. The Jews who believed in the divinity of Jesus were being expelled from the synagogues. This left them vulnerable and asking "Where is the Risen Christ?" John sought to reassure them that the Risen Christ was in their midst.

Have you noticed how the word "witness" is used four times here to describe who John the Baptist is, e.g. "a witness to speak for the light"? Have you noticed too how his witness leads to him being questioned by the men sent by the Pharisees, men who want to deter him from witnessing to the light?

As baptized Christians we have been anointed to bring the good news of Jesus to others. Each of us is also called to be "a witness to speak for the light", a joyful witness to the presence of Jesus here in our midst. Mindful that our salvation has already begun let us pray for the grace to give joyful witness and for a deeper conviction that there stands among us the One who will come in glory.

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.

Group returns to page 44 of Advent booklet.

Dioceses of

Achonry, Ardagh & Clonmacnois, Armagh, Clonfert, Elphin, Kerry,
Killala, Kilmore, Limerick, Ossory, Tuam & Waterford & Lismore.