

DECEMBER 17, 2017



THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT



ISAIAH 61:1-2A, 10-11

LUKE 1:46-48, 49-50, 53-54

1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-24

JOHN 1:6-8, 19-28

REFLECTION

Today's Gospel introduces us to John the Baptist. John was a traveling preacher whose central message was one of preparation. Many people thought that perhaps John was Elijah or the Messiah, but he was quick to correct them. Rather, he was "the voice of one crying out in the desert, / 'Make straight the way of the Lord'" (v. 23).

If the Gospel were a theater production, John would be Jesus' tech crew, the ones behind the scenes, making sure everything is ready for the actors. He said to everyone he encountered, "It's not about me! I'm working hard to set the stage for the real Messiah—the one who will bring about the Reign of God and save all of us. So get ready!" John wasn't afraid to get into the challenging, often messy business of sharing the Good News with everyone he met.

"He was not the light, but came to testify to the light" (John 1:8). John knew that Jesus was the one who needed to be in the spotlight. He dedicated his whole life to helping people create a welcoming space for Jesus in their hearts. He filled people with anticipation and gave them something to hope for. And when John plunged Jesus into the Jordan River at his baptism, he knew that it was time to step back and let Jesus shine.

ACTION

In just over a week, we will celebrate the birth of our Lord at Christmas. Pick one thing that you can do (for example, offering an extra prayer for someone who needs it, sharing a word of kindness with a person who is struggling, or foregoing a luxury like coffee to donate to a charity), and commit to doing it every day between now and Christmas.

JOURNALING QUESTIONS

- How have you been preparing your heart and our world this Advent for the arrival of Christ?
- What can you do in your life to set the stage for Christ's coming?
- What effect might this have on you and those around you?