

Third Week of Advent



John 1:6-8, 19-28

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 he 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 prophesied:

A voice that cries in the wilderness:

Make a straight way 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 his sandal-strap.' This happened at Bethany, on the far side of the Jordan, where John was baptising.

Focus Questions

1. What does a witness do?
2. What is the light?
3. What is the difference between a priest and a Levite?
4. Who is Elijah?
5. What does 'baptising' mean?
6. Where is Bethany?

REFLECTION

- John the Baptist was a witness to the light. He could acknowledge the truth about himself and his role. He was a prophet and was in continuity with the prophets, but he was not the Messiah. John's mission was to introduce Jesus and help people be ready for and recognise Jesus. John worked in the wilderness and introduced a new era from there.
- How does John help me to introduce Jesus in the wilderness of this time? He reminds me that I am called to be a witness to the true Light – Jesus. I ask the Lord to strengthen that sense of mission in my life and give me the grace to live it.
- John knew that his role was to bring people to Christ. So is ours. We try to live our lives right so that people will be able to know through us that faith in Christ makes all the difference.
- John knew that his baptism was preparatory; it was only 'with water'. Jesus baptised each of us with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit dwells in us; he leads and guides us; we try to be open to his powerful work in our hearts.