

## **Third Sunday of Advent**

### **December 11, 2011**

**Call to prayer:** Lord God, may we, your people, who look forward to the birthday of Christ experience the joy of salvation and celebrate life with love and thanksgiving. We ask this through Christ our Lord, Amen.

#### **A reading from the holy gospel according to John 1:6-8. 19-28**

A man named John was sent from God.

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

He was not the light, but came to testify to the light.

And this is the testimony of John.

When the Jews from Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to him to ask him,

“Who are you?” He admitted and did not deny it, but admitted, “I am not the Christ.”

So they asked him, “Who are you then? Are you Elijah?”

And he said, “I am not.” “Are you the Prophet?” He answered, “No.”

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?”

He said:

“I am the voice of one crying out in the desert, ‘make straight the way of the Lord,’ as Isaiah the prophet said.”

Some Pharisees were also sent. They asked him,

“Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ or Elijah or the Prophet?”

John answered them,

“I baptize with water; but there is one among you whom you do not recognize, the one who is coming after me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to untie.”

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

The gospel of our Lord

**Focus:** John the Baptist saw himself as the one to prepare the way for Jesus to come. His baptism was a simple water rite unlike Jesus’ baptism in the Holy Spirit. John the Baptist proclaims the Good News of Jesus’ coming and prepares our hearts for this event.

#### **Questions for reflection and sharing:**

1. How do you answer the question, “Who are you?”
2. How can you imitate John the Baptist and be a witness to Jesus in your family, at work, and in your neighborhood?
3. Has anyone recently helped you find faith?

**Concluding prayer:** O God of goodness, you sent John the Baptist to announce the good news of Christ’s coming. Send us to live lives illumined by the Gospel, that we too may be a source of joy in your promise, through the same Christ our Lord, Amen.