



WEEKLY GOSPEL REFLECTION



Third Sunday of Advent, Cycle C

Fr. David Rosenberg
Institute for Spiritual Direction

*"I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming;
He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." Luke 3:16*

In this passage, John the Baptist calls us to repentance and conversion, with clear undercurrents of the consequences for failure to do so. But even through the undercurrent, John's message through Luke was one of "good news" to the people.

The Gospel of Luke, in absolute concert with the other Gospels, makes it clear that John the Baptist is "*submissio*," i.e. conforming his life to the mission of Jesus, as all Christians are called to do. (see John 3:30 "*He must increase. I must decrease.*") John baptizes with water, but Jesus will baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire. In humility, John states he is not worthy to serve as a servant to Jesus, even to the most menial of tasks of unfastening his sandals.

John the Baptist's words about judgment are a clarion call, but should not be taken in an overly negative way. They are simply words to the wise to follow the way of the Lord and to daily seek to improve where improvement is needed.

As we break open John's message, we are given the good news of salvation for those who seek to live according to the will of God. Judgment is no threat for those who right-order their lives; in fact, it will be a moment of validation for them and for their way of life, as chaos gives way to order, evil is destroyed, and God's will triumphs.

Reflect on this passage through the lens of repentance, conversion and metanoia. (*i.e. a rebuilding and healing of the soul; a profound, spiritual, transformation through conversion*)

This might be a good time to review the EXAMIN prayer by St. Ignatius of Loyola, a method of reviewing your day in the presence of God.

Here are the five steps to the EXAMIN:

1. Ask God for light: look at the day through the eyes of Jesus.
2. Express Gratitude: Find God in all things as a gift, welling up with profound gratitude.
3. Review your day: seeking the counsel of the Holy Spirit, did you with humility take on the compassion of the Sacred Heart of Jesus as you look back on the day.
4. Admit your shortcomings: Take a few moments for an examination of conscience to recall those moments where fear, pride or lust got the better of you.
5. Look with joy to the day to come: Where is God calling you to best fulfill your purpose in life.

*Third Sunday of Advent, Cycle C***A reading from the holy gospel according to Luke.**

The crowds, who were gathering to be baptized by John, asked him, "What should we do?"

In reply John said to them,

"Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise."

Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him,

"Teacher, what should we do?"

He said to them,

"Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you."

Soldiers also asked him,

"And we, what should we do?"

He said to them,

"Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages."

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah,

John answered all of them by saying,

"I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

So, with many other exhortations,

John proclaimed the good news to the people.

The Gospel of the Lord

