

Sunday December 6, 2020

Second Week of Advent Reflection

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God has been communicating with man and through man for thousands of years. Throughout the old and the new testament His sole desire has been to prepare us for His return. I have often asked myself, why use mere mortals to convey His desire for our redemption? Why didn't He present Himself in all His glory to sinful man? I suspect this would have had much more of an impact than the use of man to convey His wishes.

In today's readings God makes use of three people to communicate with man, Isaiah a prophet of God, Peter, an apostle of Christ and John the Baptist heralding the coming of Christ. Three men who never met, yet each spoke the word of the same God. There seems to be an urgency in their voices. The prophet Isiah is excited to tell us of a new era that will unfold with a cry in the wilderness by one who will proclaim a baptism of repentance and the forgiveness of sin, John the Baptist. John was dressed in camel hair and with a leather belt round his waist, not a pretty sight I would imagine, and yet, people came from all parts of the region, from the whole Judean countryside including the people of Jerusalem itself, they came because He was saying something that resonated with them, words from God, words of hope. A proclamation directly from God Himself.

God, communicating with man through man. John spoke of one more powerful than himself coming after him. To illustrate how unworthy he was in comparison to Jesus he said, he wasn't even fit to stoop down and untie his sandals. John then told them, "I baptise with water but, He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit." This final statement must have surprised them. Holy Spirit? However, I must think that John also discussed the spirit in man also.

St. Peter in the second reading stated very strongly, do not ignore this one fact, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. Peter was telling us that time was created for mans benefit, and He also gives us the reason why. God wants us not to perish but for all to come to repentance. His desire is for us to progress from sinner to saint. This may sound

like a tall order, and it is. But people had to know there was a real meaning for life, and time was that opportunity to grow in knowledge, holiness and Godliness.

We cannot enter heaven clothed in sin, but we can, clothed in repentance. Sin cannot exist in the presence of God and this is the very reason why God used man to engage with man. Each time God presented Himself in the old testament as a burning bush a pillar of fire or a column of smoke He was protecting sinful man. Jesus being the second person of the Trinity came to us in the form of physical man for this very same reason, to protect sinful man. Only after He had atoned for our sins and was raised from the dead were the disciples allowed to see Him in all His glory.

During this period of Advent, we must be that voice crying in the wilderness.