

# 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent – December 6, 2020 – Reflection

“John the Baptist appeared in the desert proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.”

The Gospel of St. Mark

All over the Commonwealth, all over the country, people are lining up on foot, in their cars ... lining up in fear ... lining up to be tested and judged ... lining up to see oddly dressed medical people in haz-mat suits to get a test for the Corona Virus.

In the days just before Jesus began His public ministry of healing, mercy, and salvation, people were lining up in fear of judgment, lining up to see an oddly dressed prophet with wild mane attired in camel's hair to get a test for closeness to God, to show their repentance for contracting the virus of sin by being baptized in the River Jordan by John the Baptist.

All of us wonder at every cough or sneeze, am I infected? Will I become sick? Am I well ... am I safe?

Just as we worry and wonder over these things of the body in this time of virus and pandemic, so should we worry and wonder over these things of the soul in this time of making ready a place in our hearts for the coming of Jesus who can heal us of our infirmities, inoculate us

against the virus of sin, forgive us for our careless exposure to things that sicken our souls and take us away from the love of God.

Advent is one of the two special times of the Church year when we are urged to get ourselves tested ... to examine our consciences for signs of spiritual sickness ... to humbly admit that we have not faithfully followed all the protocols the Lord has given us to stay safe ... and to seek out the oddly dressed minister of mercy, the priest in mask and stole, to hear our confession and absolve us of our sins.

On Tuesday evening December 15<sup>th</sup>, the priest, the minister of healing will be in the confessional room at St. Brigid Church for two hours from 6 to 8 PM. For those who come to the church that evening, there will be ample room to be socially distanced. The confessional room will allow you to kneel behind a thick screened divider separated from the masked priest by six feet. There you can test your conscience ... the gluttony and selfishness, the gossip and impurity, the straying from prayer and the lies, the anger and the unfaithfulness ... all the symptoms of serious and even lethal spiritual illness ... all of it can be washed clean in the outpouring of the Lord's healing and mercy in the Sacrament of Penance.

This Advent of all Advents let us come to the Baptist's river of healing, hear the message of the wild prophet, "Prepare Ye the way of the Lord, make straight a highway for our God," ... a highway that leads right into a pure, forgiven, open heart ready to receive its Savior who is Christ the Lord.