

Preparing Ourselves

John the Baptist was the first prophet in Israel in more than 200 years. Some even thought he was the Messiah. He preached with authority, and people traveled from all over Judea to hear his words.

His message was to prepare the way. As any pope, king, or president announces his intentions in advance so preparations can be made, John was sent to announce the coming of the Son of God and to tell the people how to prepare.

Jesus comes to the world in three different ways: first, when he was born in Bethlehem and walked the earth; second, when he comes again at the end of time; and finally, when he comes to us constantly in the sacraments and liturgy. Preparing for his arrival is

For Reflection

How does John the Baptist's call to repentance challenge me? Where do I need to ask for God's mercy?

not a matter of fixing roads, painting houses, or organizing a parade. Our king desires a transformed spirit: "Not by appearance shall he judge...." John warns that we cannot

hide behind the faith of another; each one of us needs to show the fruits of our own faith. Yet we need not fear, for he who comes has every intention of saving us. He appears as Lord and invites us to accept his kingdom. He is also a teacher who shows us the way back to the Father. Above all he is a friend who forgives unconditionally and accepts our sincere yet feeble efforts.

This week, reflect on this image of John the Baptist, heed his words, and imitate him: Cry out for repentance, cleanse others from their sins, and prepare the way to God.

—Fr. Mark Haydu, LC



Piece: *Saint John the Baptist*
Artist: Pietro Lorenzetti, circa 1329
Location: Vatican Pinacoteca, Room II

"And do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you, God can raise up children to Abraham from these stones" (Matthew 3:9).