

2020 January 19

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

**Readings:**

First: Isaiah 49.3, 5-6, "I will give you as a light to the nations." (6c)

Psalm 40, "Then I said: 'Here I am.'" (7a)

Second: 1 Corinthians 1.1-3, 'Grace to you and peace from God our Father.' (3a)

Gospel: John 1.29-34, "Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (29b)

***Waiting is sweet!***

Life was hard for John the Baptist. He lived in the wilderness, eating wild berries and wild honey, wearing the skin of animals, with no social contact, lonely, miserable, and may be forsaken. His father Zachariah prophesied that he would "be called the Prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way" (Luke 1:76-77). We are not sure if he ever appropriated to himself this prophesy or that of Isaiah, "as the voice of the one crying out in the wilderness, prepare the way" (Isiah 40:3-5). Even when Jesus came to him to be baptized he might not have recognized him until the Spirit of God appeared and John heard the voice from above. Then he had a glimpse of Jesus as the would-be Messiah, a momentary and passing spot revelation.

Later John finds Jesus walking toward him along the crowd, and another lightening from the Spirit flashed prompting him to proclaim, "Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). That too was not the end of questions in the Baptist's mind regarding his mission, his worth as the herald of the Messiah; doubting questions in his mind if at all he has fulfilled his work of preparing the way for the Christ. Any servant of God, any true believer in God, has this lingering doubt about one's worth and mission, of one's own deficiencies and fallout from expectations.

In his prison cell John was in the dark, both physically and spiritually and finally he takes the ultimate step of sending his disciples to Jesus and asking him to clarify if he (Jesus) was the one to come or if he (John) had to wait for another? (Matthew 11:3). John gets the response from Jesus, which was proof enough to put his mind at peace with a sense of fulfilling his mission. This indirect contact was also the formal farewell between Jesus and the Baptist, who was shortly killed by Herod.

After that Jesus glorified John on earth by elevating him above all born of women! The Baptist prepared the Israelites to meet their long expected Messiah, whom they did not recognize properly, just like the Baptist could not also recognize Jesus fully in spite of a few direct encounters. Hence, let us not be too depressed if our relationship with Jesus does not stay with us as a lasting experience. Just think that we are no better than the Baptist and the disciples of Jesus. However, we cannot afford to stop striving to know Jesus till the very end.