

Making a path – *Fr. Steven Labaire*

This is certainly a December like no other.

This is the strangest Advent our generation has ever faced.

We're navigating a global pandemic. The economy is on thin ice. Political tensions in our nation are as high as they've been since the Vietnam War.

And yet, in the midst of this uncertain time, God's word speaks to us, just as it has spoken to generations before us.

This Sunday his word speaks of:

A road through the desert.

A highway in the wasteland.

A voice preparing a way of a rugged land where a shepherd leads his flock.

(Isaiah 40, 1-5, 9-11)

So, out of the *wasteland* of Covid-19 are we being called to walk a path of sacrifice for the sake of others? Are we being challenged to recognize that our behaviors profoundly impact the lives of others...even to the point of life and death?

Out of the *rugged land* of an up-and-down, uncertain economy are we being called to re-think our understanding of "wealth?" Is "wealth" found primarily in bank accounts or investments? Or, is our most basic "wealth" human

connection and resilient love? Have we always "invested" in our connections as we ought?

Out of the unfriendly *wilderness* of our political landscape, with all its divisions and acrimony, are we being called to recognize that a civilized nation cannot stand when one half of the citizenry hurls insults and attacks on the other half? Where is all this anger taking us? Do we need to re-learn how to dialogue with civility and respect?

John the Baptist called the people of his time to take a good, hard look at themselves. Could the voice of the Baptizer be echoing through the present crises, beckoning us to take a good, hard look at ourselves and where we might be headed?

Recently, a friend of mine who works in high-tech, shared with me the fact that the word "*crisis*" has become one of the most frequently used words of 2020.

"*Crisis*" has two definitions: 1. A moment of danger and instability; 2. A turning point which requires the making of important decisions.

Both 1 and 2 apply to this final month of the year. The 2nd, however, speaks to the grace of opportunity.

Pray that this present crisis would open our hearts to Christ- that he might guide our steps.

If we dare to listen and to act, we will have begun to trace a holy path, through the very strange wilderness of December 2020.