

...there has been none greater than John the Baptist;  
yet the least in the Kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

Isaiah paints the Kingdom in lush fertile tones. The afflicted and needy will be answered.

So where do I fit into this picture of the Kingdom. Where do you?

When I was a teenage, I used to fantasize what it might have been like to have been marching around Palestine with Jesus 2000 years ago. I would have been able to experience everything first hand. I would be emboldened to be brave like the first martyrs. There would have been no room for the doubts that plagued that teenage Pat.

One would think that John the Baptist would have it all figured out for there had been none greater than him. John recognized his lord when he leaped in his mother's womb when his pregnant relative, Mary, came visiting.

It was clear to John that there was one mightier than him for whom John was preparing the way.

And yet still, when John was in prison awaiting his executioner, he sent his disciples to ask Jesus if he was the one they were all anxiously awaiting.

If you ever have doubts about your faith, do not grow discouraged. You are not alone. Paul prayed that he believed and asked for God to help with his unbelief.

Have confidence that through Jesus' saving act, through you joining his sacrifice in communion with his passion, death and resurrection, that you truly are of the Kingdom of heaven.

God loves doubters because that leads to seeking. And all who seek will find themselves in God's embrace.

That's not a bad image to take forward during Advent. As we look towards the day of seeing Mary embrace her child at the manger, feel free to imagine God embracing you with the same doting love and parental devotion.