

3rd Sunday of Advent Year A

Sunday Reflection

The Visitation of the Lord

The land was destroyed. The people were broken. Isaiah proclaimed the visitation of the Lord. He asked the people to gather at the city gate to welcome God when he appears. Isaiah urged the earth to bloom abundant flowers. The people must strengthen their feeble hands; affirm their weakened knees; encourage those paralyzed with fear. They must tell their neighbor that God comes with a suitcase full of gifts. God is coming to save the blind, the deaf, the lame, the mute—and to redeem all of creation. From the city gate, the people will sing with everlasting joy. No more sorrow and mourning. (Isaiah 35:1-6a; 10)

In a prison, John the Baptist goes the way of every human being; he resembles a reed shaken by the wind. It is hard to understand why John questions his own proclamation of Jesus: “Look, here is the Lamb of God!” (John 1:36) When suffering and persecution become his prison, John appears to doubt the identity of Jesus; yet Jesus has no doubt about the identity of John the Baptist. To Jesus, John is more than a prophet. John prepared the way for God, and he introduced God to the people. No one is greater than John the Baptist. Humility is the prerequisite for heaven. And the least in heaven is guilty of a little pride on earth, but not so with John. No one is humbler than John the Baptist. (Matthew 11:2-11)

Jesus challenged John and his disciples to remember the past. Your memory holds evidence of God’s presence in your life. Despite recent hardships, your former days of glory, your appointments, and your promotions offer a remedy for today’s disappointments. Dream of the glory yet to come. God is always with you.

Be patient until the day of God’s Visitation. Wait patiently like a farmer waits for the rain. The day of God’s Visitation is very close. God stands at the door, carrying a suitcase full of gifts. The prophecy is true; so—believe it. (James 5:7-10)

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