



ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

THIS SUNDAY December 10 & BEYOND

“See The Sign On Your Journey



You may have heard of the prophet who suddenly “appeared” and began to announce that the Messiah of Israel was coming. It is, of course, appropriate, during this season of Advent to bring to our attention in our worship and study about what is coming. That is the essence of the 4 week Advent season: the coming of Jesus, who is the Messiah. The first Sunday of Advent we heard about the second time he comes; an exciting and dramatic announcement and time. And then there is the announcement of the prophets from hundreds of years before that the Messiah would be coming, born to

a Jewish maiden. Here’s a section from Sunday’s Gospel that makes the general announcement from that earlier prophet, Isaiah:

‘As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way;
the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight.’”

That messenger, that prophet, is also proclaimed in this week’s Gospel. That prophet out in the wilderness, John the baptizer, announces that the Messiah is coming immediately to begin his public ministry.

That’s quite a bit of announcing of the coming of the Messiah. Part of that point, I believe, from God’s concern is that it – the Messiah’s coming – is not overlooked or missed. Or ignored.

So here’s what the next couple of lines says,

“John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.”

How is it that someone would suddenly appear and should actually be seen and heard, and by so many?! I have spent a lot of time driving back and forth through the desert area through Mojave. Mostly it's wilderness, as far as the eye can see, except for an occasional "For Sale" sign proclaiming 60 acres, or so, available. I've never seen anybody, much less a crowd of people, standing around those signs.

There's actually an interesting similarity. I only saw those signs because of a major – if lonely – highway upon which I was traveling. And hundreds and thousands of cars those same days. It was a lot further between destinations for me, but the "wilderness" area described in the Gospel was the wilderness of Judea, and according to the Gospel more specifically that wilderness adjacent to the River Jordan. That means basically the area between Jerusalem and Jericho. It was a through rough, wilderness area. Check out www.harmony.bible for topographic maps and videos, and you will see. The further similarity, though, was it was well travelled. The similarity stops there since it was not the distance I would drive, but considerably shorter, like only 30 miles. Still, it could take the same time to walk the 30 as for me to drive the longer. And that meant people talking, and passing, and sharing, and being pointed to. As a result, it would not take long before word got out, and John the baptizer's message and proclamation being heard, and people agreeing to repent, and get into the water.

John's message about Jesus coming was both hard to hear, but mixed with Good News.

'A voice says, "Cry out!"
And I said, "What shall I cry?"
say to the cities of Judah,
"Here is your God!"'

That's pretty scary. But it is two-fold. Because three years later on the cross, Jesus the Messiah exchanged His perfect righteousness for our sin and paid in full the penalty for that sin. Our work is to do what so many of the crowds before John did. Agree and be baptized. You will discover the Good Shepherd who will carry His sheep to His bosom for ever.

That wilderness "for sale" sign has your name on it. Don't miss it on your life journey.

Father Rob Eaton, Interim Rector

CALENDAR

SUNDAY:

8:00a Low Mass (Church)

10:30a Solemn Mass (Church)

—*The entrance to the church is on 6th Avenue*—

Note: Coffee Hour & Fellowship follow the Mass in the Parish Hall.

MONDAY: 7:00p (AA) Doctors' Group (Fireside Room)

TUESDAY: Noon Mass (St. Mary's Chapel)

FRIDAY AA Meetings

8:00p Ladies' Group (Fireside Room)

8:15p Men's Group (Parish Hall)