

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Isaiah 61:1-2, 10-11 1 Thess. 5:16-24 John 1:6-8, 19-28

HOMILY

The main character in today's Gospel is not Jesus.

It is John the Baptist harassed by a few interrogators.

Between John and his interrogators, we are presented with two ways of approaching life and two ways of approaching God's presence in the world.

John demonstrates One way: the way of a witness.

The priests and the Levites demonstrate another way of approaching life: the way of interrogation.

Which means we are either witnesses or interrogators.

Both John and the interrogators are sent:

John appeared as a witness sent by God.

The priests and Levites appeared as interrogators sent by the religious authorities.

Their mission was to interrogate!

Look at the questions they ask:

"Who are you," "Are you Elijah?" "Are you the prophet?" "Why are you baptizing?"

The investigators neither know themselves nor do they know the one they are interrogating.

They are in the dark. Witnesses, represented by John, however, are different.

John knows who he is and who he is not. He claims for himself neither too much nor too little. He knows his boundaries. That's what makes him a credible witness.

He speaks the truth, but he is not the truth.

He bears witness to the light, but he is not the light.

He is the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, but he is not the Word of God.

The real difference between witnesses and interrogators is this:

investigators demand answers, witnesses offer hope.

More than ever our world today needs witnesses of hope.

We do not need more answers or explanations.

We need to hear John's voice of hope. *"the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord.'"*

Today we learn that answers and explanations cannot sustain you.

It is the Word of hope that can see us through tragedy.

Hope makes life possible.

Hope reminds us that it won't always be like this.

Which voice do we assent to?

Which voice do we offer?

Do we offer the voice of hope or do we offer a voice of interrogation?