

**SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT**  
**December 10, 2023**

**Gospel: (Mark 1:1-8)**

As it is written in Isaiah, the prophet: Behold, I am sending my messenger ahead of you; he will prepare your way. A voice of one crying out in the desert: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths." John the Baptist appeared in the desert proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins... This is what he proclaimed: "One mightier than I is coming after me. I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

**Reflection:**

John knew the Advent secret: He focused his whole life on the coming of Jesus. He realized that his all-consuming vocation was to prepare the way of the Lord. Our own vocation is very similar. Saint Vincent tells us that the person of Jesus must be absolutely central in our lives, as it was for following Christ. We seek to share in his love and reverence for the Father and his compassionate and effective love for the poor. With him we trust in God's providence, which rules over all. For Vincentians, as for John the Baptist, there is nothing else but Jesus. (Maloney, *Seasons in Spirituality*, p. 47)

**Words of Father Robert Maloney, C.M.**

John the Baptist's life makes it very clear that the following of Christ involves a demanding asceticism. He knew how to focus attention not on himself but on the Lord whom he served. He knew humility, and the ground for enormous freedom that humility gives. The humble recognize, with Vincent, that "all good which is done by them comes from God." Power, prestigious positions, the praise of others, wealth—all these mean little to the humble. The humble recognize their own gifts and their own limitations. Saint Vincent described humility as a missionary virtue that was utterly necessary in the service of the poor, saying: "Let us work hard at acquiring virtue and principally humility, yes humility. Let us ask God constantly that he be pleased to give us this virtue" (Maloney, *Seasons in Spirituality*, p.45-46)

**Discussion:** (*Share thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence*)

**How do you see the virtue of humility alive in your Conference?**

**Closing Prayer:**

Come Lord Jesus, give us the grace to "Make straight your paths"  
-**teach us humility recognizing "all good comes from God."**  
We so often lack power and human resources,  
-**deepen our trust in the power of your Spirit working in us.**  
With John the Baptist,  
-**may we prepare the way for the coming of Christ.**  
As we eagerly await your coming, come to all people  
-**especially the poor and the forgotten.**                      **Amen**

