

**THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT**  
**December 17, 2023**

**Gospel: (John 1:6-8)**

A man named John was sent from God. He came for testimony, to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to testify to the light. And this is the testimony of John. When the Jews from Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to him to ask him, “Who are you?” he admitted and did not deny it, but admitted, “I am not the Christ.” So they asked him...“Who are you, so we can give an answer to those who sent us? What do you have to say for yourself?” He said: “I am the voice of one crying out in the desert, make straight the way of the Lord.”

**Reflection:**

John knew how to die. He knew how to speak the truth even when it cost dearly. He knew how to engage in an active public ministry to which crowds flocked, but also how to withdraw into the desert for prayer and penance. John the Baptist makes it very clear that we will live genuinely for Christ only if we are willing to die for him. Only the person who is practiced in the art of daily dying will be able to hand himself over to God in an act of final resignation, as John did. Daily dying consists in pouring out one’s energies in the service of the poor, in listening attentively, in praying faithfully, in living harmoniously with others, in seeking reconciliation, in doing penance, in renouncing anything that is an obstacle to the following of Christ. John the Baptist calls us to prepare the way of the Lord by eliminating from our lives whatever impedes his coming. (Maloney, Seasons in Spirituality, p.48)

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

“Let me suggest that today, for us members of the Vincentian Family, an asceticism like that of John the Baptist might take these forms especially: rising early to praise God and strengthen our brothers and sisters in daily prayer; employing moderation and a critical sense in using television and other media; withholding divisive words and negative criticism; being disciplined and balanced in what we eat and drink; working hard, as servants do, for our “lords and masters,” the poor.” (Maloney, Seasons in Spirituality, p.48)

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

**What form of John the Baptist’s asceticism do you feel called to practice this Advent?**

**Closing Prayer:**

As our Advent journey continues, we turn in hope to Christ and ask:

**-Come, Lord Jesus, and do not delay.**

Watch over all children, that they may know your love,

**-Come, Lord Jesus, and do not delay.**

Protect all who are abused and neglected,

**-Come, Lord Jesus, and do not delay.**

Strengthen all Vincentians in their efforts to reveal your love to others,

**-Come, Lord Jesus, and do not delay. Amen**

