

## **Second Sunday of Advent**

Mark 1:1-8 or Luke 3:1-6 or Matthew 3:1-12

**“A voice crying out in the desert...”**

Matthew records in today’s gospel!

I would to ask three questions:

- 1. Whose voice?**
- 2. What type of voice is it?**
- 3. Why is this voice “crying”?**

Before answering these questions, let’s us define what a **voice is?**

A **“voice”** is the **power** of uttering **sounds** through the mouth to **express** an **opinion**, a **wish** or a **message!** The **voice** in today’s gospel is fitting this description to the **“t.”**

It is a ***powerful voice uttering an important message!***

**Whose voice is it?**

This **“voice”** belongs none other than the **precursor**, the **forerunner** of **Our Lord and Messiah, John** the **Baptist!**

**Second. What type of voice is it?**

It is a **voice calling** people’s attention to an important **message.**

Just like the **“town criers”** of old who were sent to make public announcements in the streets or in the marketplaces!

**John's** principal "**call**" in life was to "**point out to people Jesus—the long awaited-Messiah.**"

**John** spends his entire life **preparing** himself for this **ministry** by **prayering** and **fasting & nourishing** himself on **locusts** (grasshoppers) and **wild honey...mmm...good!**

**John's lifestyle** was also a sign of **self-sacrifice**. As a prophet, he renounced the luxuries of this life seen from his daily diet to his choice of clothing which were made of camel's hair fastened by a **leather belt** around his waist. **John** wore a camel's hair fastened with a leather belt

**John the Baptist** lived, ate, and dressed like a **prophet** of his time. In fact, **John the Baptist** would become the last great prophet of the **Old Testament!**

**John's voice** is unique because it is "**crying in the desert.**"

It is a "**voice**" which revealed that **God Almighty** had entrusted this humble **prophet** a great ministry.

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The **ministry "to call"** people's attention and to "**point**" them to **His Son, Jesus of Nazareth.**

**John** is recorded saying that when he saw **Jesus walking** by, he said to his own disciples

**“There goes the Lamb of God.”**

### **Third. Why is the voice crying?**

This detail is important because a **“crying voice”** is very different than a **“speaking voice.”** The voice of a speaker normally speaks **plainly and calmly.**

**John’s voice** contains a **“cry.”** A **cry** is a **lamentation** expressing **grief** and **sorrow** of a situation.

### **What was John crying about?**

**John,** like any **prophetic voice** recognized that the **people** were **not** living grace-filled lives according to God’s ways, rather living a life of sin. This caused the **Baptist** to experience **sorrow and grief.** **God’s** heart always experiences sorrow when choose sin over virtue.

**John’s cry** is a **lamentation expressing sorrow and grief,** but the voice is also filled with **hope.**

**A sincere hope** that people would come back to **God** and receive the **“Baptism of repentance through the forgiveness of sins”** to prepare the way of the Lord.

**Does this sound strange to us? It shouldn't!**

Because the first step towards **conversion** is **admitting that we have sinned.**

**Once we recognize our sins and acknowledge** them, then we confess them to **God in the Sacrament of Confession to experience God's Mercy and Joy.**

**When we confess our sins sincerely and humbly then our conversion process will also help other to prepare themselves for the coming of Christ Jesus.**

**Sins** need to be first **identified**, then **acknowledged** and finally **uproot them!**

Much like a painful decaying tooth, that once identified and located, it needs to be uprooted immediately otherwise it could infect the whole body.

I will close with a **true story** that reminds us of the importance of listening to the "**right voice**" whether it is the **voice** of our informed conscience, the **voice** of Scripture, the **voice** of the Church or even the **prophetic voice** in our midst.

"A friend approached his nonbelieving friend and told him the conversion of several of his friends who after reading **Holy Scriptures** became believers. The nonbelieving friend after hearing their stories of conversion one after the other, left and went into the garden to weep bitterly in his agony. Then, suddenly he heard a **"voice"** of a child saying to him, **"Take it and read it, take it and read it."**

This **nonbeliever** understood this **"voice"** as a **"divine command"** and he opened his book of **Holy Scripture** and read it; finally, **he was converted to Christianity!**

Amazingly, the **"voice"** of the **Child** was identified that **of Christ** and the **man who heard it and listened to it and was converted to Christianity was none other than the famous son of St. Monica, Augustine.**

Interestingly, **Augustine**, after his own conversion experience became a **prophetic voice** for the world as a **priest, bishop, saint, and doctor** of the **Roman Catholic Church!**

**Whose voice are you and I listening to these days?**