

IV Advent 2022
Sermon – Saint Joseph Parish
Father Craig Looney
Phil 4.4-7 St John 1.19-28



Is Jesus really the ONE...or should we too be looking for another.

In last week's Gospel reading from Matthew, John is in jail and sent some of his own disciples to ask Jesus if he is the One...or should they look for someone else? Jesus told John's disciples to go back and tell him what they were seeing with their own eyes.

This week's Gospel reading from John (the Evangelist) is a sort of prequel to last week's. Once again...John the Baptist is the guest star. Some religious teachers ask John the same question he asked Jesus...is he the One? John says his role is to be the public relations man for Jesus. He says he is not the One...he is the voice Isaiah said would shout out in the desert for people to make a straight path for the Lord to travel.

At the conclusion of every Mass we read the first fourteen verses of Chapter 1 of John's Gospel. John writes God sent a messenger named John to tell people about the light. He was not that light...he was sent to get people ready for the light. The messenger John the Evangelist is talking about is John the Baptist...the Light coming into the World is Jesus.

If we read the next several verses of Chapter 1...John the Evangelist goes on to say John the Baptist cried out that Jesus is the one he was talking about when he said, "He comes after me, but he is greater than I am, because he existed before I was born." John the Evangelist then writes, "No one has ever seen God. The only Son, who is the same as God and is at the Father's side, he has made him known."

We don't know what the religious teachers did after John the Baptist told them he was not the one. They asked him to explain himself. He told them the one they were looking for was standing among them and they don't even know him. John said he was not good enough to untie the Messiah's shoes. The next day...John saw Jesus coming to him and called him the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

There is a sense of urgency in John the Baptist's message we should get ready to receive Jesus the Light of the World. John follows in the footsteps of many of the Old Testament prophets who urged the people to turn away from dark behavior and death and embrace light and life...to turn back to God.

Our friend, Saint Paul, also has something to say about Jesus. He encourages us to act like people who live in the Light of Christ. He tells us to rejoice! Jesus is coming back soon. For now...

...We should show a gentle attitude toward everyone; we know the Lord is coming soon; we shouldn't worry about anything; we should ask God for what we need; God's peace is far beyond our understanding; it keeps our hearts and minds safe in union with Jesus Christ.

...We should fill our minds with those things that are good and that deserve praise; things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, and honorable. And we are to put into practice what we have learned and received from our friend, Saint Paul, both from his words and from his actions. And God's peace will be with us.

Jesus said those who believe in him are happy. It matters a great deal what we believe about him. And because it matters a great deal what we believe about him...it also matters a great deal how we conduct ourselves. Talk is cheap...actions speak volumes.

In lighting the Fourth Advent Candle we asked in the Collect for God to stir up his power and come to us with his great power and might to help us...now. We are reminded what was said as we lit the candle...God does not speak to us in blazing flashes, but rather with a fragile flame, a baby.

Is Jesus the One or should we be looking for someone else? Listen to what John the Evangelist says about John the Baptist. Listen to what John the Baptist says about Jesus. Listen to Paul's words of encouragement.

We have our answer. Jesus is the One! Let's get ready to welcome him.

