

Reflection: Third Sunday of Advent John 1:6-8, 13-28

- Who are you? It is a question posed to John the Baptist not once, but seven times in today's Gospel passage. Seven times, in slightly different ways, the Jewish priests and Levites ask John "Who are you?"
- Interestingly John first answers by telling them who he is not.
- We hear John answer: I am not the Christ, not Elijah, not a prophet.
- And when really pressed to answer who he is, we don't hear John define himself in the way one might normally define oneself. He doesn't offer his birth name, or the family he belongs to, or the town he came from, or his occupation.
- Instead when John is pressed to answer the question "Who are you?" He defines himself by his relationship to Christ. We hear John call himself "a voice" crying out to prepare, make straight, your life for Christ to enter. We hear John humbly define himself as someone unworthy to untie the sandal strap, unworthy to be in the presence of Christ.
- Simply stated, when asked who he is, John answers: someone who lives for Christ.
- So who are you?
- Our scripture readings this third Sunday of Advent call each of us to ask the same question of ourselves: Who am I? Why am I here? What is my life's purpose?
- If we had only 10 seconds to answer the question: Who are you? We would likely give our name, or where we are from or what we do for a living. But would we in that brief ten seconds answer: I am a Christian. A follower of Jesus Christ.

- Not always the first answer that comes to mind. But it is the most important answer because it is the essence of who we are, why we are here and what our purpose is.
- Our first reading today tells us just how important this identity is. The prophet Isaiah reminds us the spirit of the lord is upon us. Put simply God dwells in you. How awesome is that. God loves you so deeply He watches over you constantly. In the vastness of the universe, with all that God has created, He thinks of you. He cares about you. He provides for you - and He relies on you!
- In our second reading today Saint Paul urges us to rejoice in our identity. Set the spirit free to work in us and through us.
- When Saint Paul tells us: “*do not quench the spirit*”, he is urging us not to ignore those promptings, those urges that come from inside us- promptings from the Holy Spirit. Promptings to put aside fear and worry and to venture out to seek what is good and reject what is evil.
- Like John the Baptist we are called to answer the question: Who are you? We are called to answer loudly and clearly: “I am a Christian”. An answer we give by our words and more importantly by our actions.
- Everyday God provides us with an opportunity to put aside selfishness and live for Jesus by caring for others, especially the needy.
- Everyday God gives us opportunities, all around us, to show who we really are –loving, compassionate people who understand the gifts we have come from God. People who understand these gifts are not given to us to greedily keep but given to us to share. Gifts to use to bring the love of Christ to others. To show others they matter, to show others what God’s love looks like.
- Like John the Baptist, we too are called to be that voice in the world and to “make straight the way of the Lord”.

