

TRINITY NEWS

Advent III John the Baptist – Truth has no Need for Apology

The prophecy of the birth of John the Baptist at Luke 1:11-17 sets the stage for the prophecy about the birth of Jesus at 1:26-38. Their lives were intertwined until the death of John the Baptizer before Jesus died at the Cross. Both died by execution because of convictions which they both refused to be silent about. The key to the prophecy by the great Messenger of God at the altar of incense in Jerusalem is found in the last words: **“He will turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. With the spirit and power of Elijah he will go before him, to turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord”** (Luke 1:16-17). John will be “filled with Holy Spirit” even from his birth (1:15).

Authenticity is self-evident. It has no need of praise or recognition. If it is not recognized in itself, then it finds no solace in words of praise, though assurances from beloved friends can help. Truth, deeply held and verified by experience, cannot be set aside to suit anyone. If that happens, then we lose part of our identity. Neither John or Jesus ever apologized for the truth that joined their hearts and minds to their tongues. One of the great documents of the 19th century was the **Apologia For His Faith** by John Henry Cardinal Newman. He began as an Anglican but in 1845 you made the most prominent switch of an Anglican in that century to the Roman Catholic Church. Their gain was our loss because Newman wrote with such beautiful prose that even those who opposed him could not but marvel at the beauty and sublime connections of the words. The word apologia does not mean an apology in Newman’s title. It means a “considered explanation” rather than saying “sorry” for something. The problem with an apology that says “sorry” is that it always carries reservations, or something held back. The Baptizer saw something in Jesus that exceeded Messianic expectations in Israel. He called him “The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). Here the Last Gospel as I call it links the Day of Atonement in Israel with the Cross of Christ at Calvary. John

anticipated and Jesus taught and lived the great Gifts of Repentance and Forgiveness. That is the Christian Apologia, “considered explanation” for our condition before God and the remedy. Repentance carries no reservations because is not just before a person, but before God, who knows our hearts and minds. When it resonates with truth that is cognizant of God, then forgiveness is the only response, and again there is no other option before God in Christ. As the Letter to the Hebrews reminds us, if we disregard the forgiveness offered through Christ for genuine repentance, then we are “holding him up to contempt” (Hebrews 6:6), because we are disregarding what is always a true and ready gift for us to use and be very thankful for, the hard-won “Grace of our lord Jesus Christ”. Before God Truth has no need for apology, and Mistruth is exposed for its deceit. I have seen the power of Repentance and Forgiveness this week and the cleansing and relief and flow of love that it brings. If you are under any personal attack or in need of forgiveness yourself, use the gifts of Christ that surpass any quick-fix shaped for expediency. Yiii!

Bishop Arthur Jones

THIS WEEK:

Monday.

- Finance Committee Meeting, 5:30pm, Parish Office
 - Vestry Meeting, 6:30pm, Rectory.

Thursday.

- Midweek Eucharist, 10am, Chapel

NEXT SUNDAY, DEC. 20:

Join us for the Advent Lessons & Carols @ 7:00pm



NEXT SUNDAY'S READINGS:

Micah 5:2-4; Psalm 80;
Hebrews 10:5-10; Luke 1:39-49