

Praying the Sunday Gospel

Advent II – C

December 5, 2021

Luke 3:1-6

Background on the Gospel

Of all the gospels, St. Luke's is most interested in history: Luke wants to situate the life and ministry of Jesus and the Church within the context of civic and religious history.

Luke's vision is also universal; he intends to demonstrate through his Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles that Jesus came to preach a message of salvation for all people, Jew and Gentile alike. That missionary zeal and energy continues on in the Church. History is ever unfolding in a dynamic way and so is the energy of the Gospel. Our own "roots" and "wings" (the past and future) are moving with us day by day under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Very significant in today's Gospel is the fact that the Word of God was being spoken by John the Baptist (and heard by the crowds) in the region of the Jordan River. The religious and political leaders were all being "by passed" by God. The implication for us is clear: we must choose between the ways of worldly power or the path of God's saving love.

Finally, it should be noted that Luke adds to the Isaiah 40 citation about a new definitive Exodus the final phase (omitted by the other Synoptic Gospels) "and all flesh shall see the salvation of God." Again, Luke underscores the universal manifestation of God's saving love and the possibility of a response by anyone with an open heart.

Points for Prayer and Reflection

1. Think about the way God usually works "under the radar" in quiet, humble settings rather in royal palaces or executive suites: Jesus came in a hidden, humble manner and chose to be with the poor and marginal rather than trying to convert the powerful and elite of his day. Where would John the Baptist be

preaching today?? Pray for the grace to recognize the Lord at work in unlikely places and people; thank God when you see and experience that mystery!

2. John preached repentance for the forgiveness of sins. Advent is a season during which we seek to prepare for the coming of the Lord: what sinful patterns prevent me from being ready to welcome the Lord in my heart, my family, my workplace? Am I truly sorry for anything in particular that weighs me down spiritually? How would I like to be more “free” – detached and open, peaceful, even joyful?
3. Do I pay more attention to people who are wealthy or powerful than people who are poor and vulnerable? Consider someone you know who might profit from the gift of your time with a call or email.
4. Advent is a time for spiritual “road re-construction.” What in my life needs some smoothing out? Is the pathway to my heart open and accessible for all people and for God Himself?!