

Daily Reflections

ADVENT

The Divine Intervention

December 6, 2015

Scripture

Luke 3:1-6

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar,
when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea,
and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee,
and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region
of Ituraea and Trachonitis,
and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene,
during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas,
the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the desert.
John went throughout the whole region of the Jordan,
proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins,
as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah:
A voice of one crying out in the desert:
“Prepare the way of the Lord,
make straight his paths.
Every valley shall be filled
and every mountain and hill shall be made low.
The winding roads shall be made straight,

and the rough ways made smooth,
and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."

Our Scripture Reflection

In today's Gospel text, we see the faith-filled work of Luke, the masterful Gospel writer. By including the names of Roman and Jewish leaders, Gentile and Jew alike, he wants to let us know that when John and Jesus begin their ministries, what they say and do will have world-wide consequences. Why? Because our God wants ALL people to know His Son and to be saved through Him. What wonderful and incredible news for us all!

Food for your Journey

There was a meeting of a group of software designers. They were using typical technical jargon to discuss a data exchange interface with a vendor. One engineer said the programming that had been ordered was delayed because the vendor was suffering from a "severe nonlinear waterfowl issue." Curious, the team leader raised his eyebrows and asked, "What exactly is a 'severe nonlinear waterfowl issue'?" The engineer replied, "They don't have all their ducks in a row." On this second Sunday of Advent, John the Baptist comes to ask us if we have a severe nonlinear waterfowl issue. Do we have all our ducks in a row for the coming of the Messiah? Luke tells us that the coming of John the Baptist is the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God"(Luke 3:4-6; Isaiah 40:3-5).

Max Lucado tells the story of a man who had been a closet slob most of his life. He just couldn't comprehend the logic of neatness. Why make up a bed if you're going to sleep in it again tonight? Why put the lid on the toothpaste tube if you're going to take it off again in the morning? The man admitted to being compulsive about being messy.

Then he got married. His wife was patient. She said she didn't mind his habits ... if he didn't mind sleeping on the couch. Since he did mind, he began to change. He said he enrolled in a 12-step program for slob. A physical therapist helped him rediscover the muscles used for hanging up shirts and placing toilet paper on the holder. His nose was reintroduced to the smell of Pine Sol. By the time his in-laws arrived for a visit, he was a new man.

But then came the moment of truth. His wife went out of town for a week. At first he reverted to the old man. He figured he could be a slob for six days and clean on the seventh. But something strange happened. He could no longer relax with dirty dishes in the sink or towels flung around the bathroom or clothes on the floor or sheets piled up like a mountain on the bed.

What happened? Simple. He had been exposed to a higher standard of living. That's what Jesus does.

-- Max Lucado, *In the Grip of Grace* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1996), 116-117.

Prayer from the Heart

Gracious Lord, During this very dark time of the year, I realize how much I need light. Illumine my heart with Your Presence so that I can see where I have grown apart from You and Your Gospel. Help me, Lord, to use these Advent days to get my life in line with Your way. Amen.



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