



Thoughts Along The Way

A Voice Crying Out in the Desert

This column was last published in the 17 December 2017 Issue of the Diocesan Chronicle

No one in Israel had ever done what the Baptist was doing in the Jordan. It was unheard of to baptize repentant sinners publicly one by one. Word of the novelty got around. People came from far and wide to wade toward him in the water or watch in wonderment from the shore.

Who was this man anyway? What in the world was he up to? Everyone asked these questions. Some visiting priests from Jerusalem had the nerve to fling them in the Baptizer's face. His answer was a model of intriguing concision: he told them he was *not* the Christ, *not* Elijah, *not* the Prophet. They would find in him no king, wonderworker, or lawgiver.

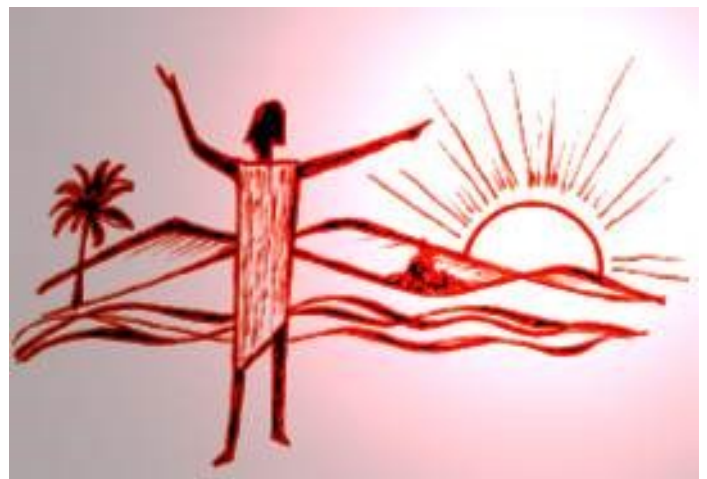
John's threefold denial only baffled his questioners the more. If he wasn't Christ, Elijah, or Prophet, then what was his baptizing *for*? What on earth did it mean? These men expected an answer they could get their hands around, an answer that would make sense of the widely appealing behavior John had made peculiarly his own. "Who *are* you, so we can give an answer to those who sent us?"

It was a natural cycle of curiosity: people went out to see for themselves the strange events they'd heard were taking place in the desert, and the activity they witnessed there led them to question John's identity. Watching what John did led them to wonder who he was.

John's reply revealed that he'd worked through that question himself. His identity was not to be found in splendid or rugged isolation, nor did his activity result from self-determination. Rather, he describes himself in Scripture as someone always and everywhere *in relation* to Another, whose sandal strap he was unworthy to loose. John confessed himself to be nothing more than a "voice" clearing a path in the darkness for the Word of Life to shine forth God's saving light.

John knew very well that "he was not the light." Rather he had been "sent from God" in order to "testify to the light." His baptizing bore witness that "the true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world." And that light bearer, John claimed, was "one who is mightier than I."

You did not need to hear these clarifying words to sense that there was more to the man clothed in camel's hair than met the eye. For according to St. Mark, "all the country of Judea and all the people of Jerusalem" went out to him to be plunged into the waters of hope. They came in advance of explanation. They didn't wait on the priests' questions and John's answers to respond to



his unauthorized, out-of-nowhere call to repentance. They simply stepped away from the ground beneath their feet into the flowing stream of the Jordan, not knowing where it might carry them, but trusting that it would wash them up on a new shore, where the crooked, conflicted paths of their life could be made straight.

Watching what John did led his observers to wonder who he was. And that led them to wonder who *they* were and what they were doing or not doing about it. Is it any different for us, looking on 2,000 years later? Don't we too long to "recognize" the "One who is mightier," to "believe in His name," and to receive "power to become children of God"? That is still the inviting promise of the voice crying in the desert.

Pensamientos A Lo Largo Del Camino

Obispo Liam Cary

La Voz Clamando en el Desierto

Esta columna fue publicada en la edición del 17 de Diciembre del 2017 de la Crónica Diocesana.

Nadie en Israel había hecho lo que el Bautista estaba haciendo en el Jordán. Era inaudito el bautizar públicamente a pecadores arrepentidos uno por uno. Noticia de la novedad se extendió. La gente venía de todas partes para caminar hacia él en el agua o mirar con asombro desde la orilla.

¿Quién era este hombre? ¿Qué es lo que estaba haciendo? Todos hacían estas preguntas. Algunos sacerdotes visitantes de Jerusalén se atrevieron a gritárselas en cara al Bautista. Su respuesta fue un modelo de concisión intrigante: les dijo que él *no* era el Cristo, *ni* Elías, *ni* el Profeta. En él no encontrarían a un rey, a alguien que hiciera milagros, o a un legislador.

La triple negación de Juan aún más desconcertó a sus interrogadores. Si él no era el Cristo, ni Elías, ni el Profeta, entonces, ¿para qué bautizaba? ¿Qué significaba? Estos hombres



esperaban una respuesta que pudieran agarrar en sus manos, una respuesta que tendría sentido del comportamiento ampliamente atractivo que Juan había hecho peculiarmente el suyo. "¿Quién eres tú, para dar una respuesta a los que nos enviaron?"

Era un ciclo natural de curiosidad: la gente salió a ver por sí mismos los extraños sucesos de los que habían escuchado y que tenían lugar en el desierto, y la actividad que presenciaron allí los llevó a cuestionar la identidad de Juan. Ver lo que hizo Juan los llevó a preguntarse quién era.

La respuesta de Juan reveló que él mismo había enfrentado esa pregunta. Su identidad no se encontraba en un aislamiento espléndido, ni su actividad resultó de la autodeterminación. Más bien, él se describe a sí mismo en las Escrituras como alguien siempre y en todas partes en *relación* con Otro, cuyas correas de la sandalia era indigno de desatar. Juan confesó que él mismo no era más que una "voz" despejando un camino en la oscuridad para que la Palabra de Vida brille la luz salvadora de Dios.

Juan sabía muy bien que "él no era la luz". Más bien había sido "enviado por Dios" para "dar testimonio de la luz". Su bautismo fue testigo de que "la verdadera luz que ilumina a cada hombre estaba llegando al mundo". Y ese portador de la luz, decía Juan, era "uno que es más poderoso que yo".

Tu no necesitabas escuchar estas palabras de clarificación para sentir que había más en el

hombre vestido de pelo de camello que a primera vista. Porque según San Marcos, “Toda la región de Judea y todos los habitantes de Jerusalén acudían a él” para sumergirse en las aguas de la esperanza. Fueron antes de la explicación. No esperaron las preguntas de los sacerdotes y las respuestas de Juan para responder a su llamado al arrepentimiento que nadie había autorizado. Simplemente se alejaron del suelo bajo sus pies en la corriente fluyente del Jordán, sin saber hacia dónde podría llevarlos, pero confiando en que los llevaría hacia en una nueva orilla, donde los senderos torcidos y conflictivos de su vida podrían hacerse rectos.

Ver lo que hizo Juan los llevó a sus observadores a preguntarse quién era. Y eso los llevó a preguntarse a sí mismos quienes eran ellos y lo que estaban o no estaban haciendo al respecto. ¿Acaso es diferente para nosotros, observando la misma escena 2,000 años después? ¿No anhelamos también “reconocer” al “que es más poderoso”, “creer en su nombre” y recibir “poder para convertirnos en hijos de Dios”? Esa sigue siendo la promesa invitante de la voz que clama en el desierto.

Bishop Cary’s Schedule

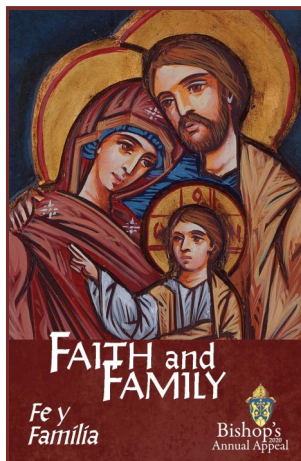
Dec 21	6:00 PM Penance Service in Sisters
Dec 23-25	St. Francis de Sales Cathedral, Baker City
Dec 26	5 pm and 7 pm Spanish Mass Blessed Sacrament, Ontario
Dec 27	8 & 10 am Mass, 12:30 pm Spanish Mass at Blessed Sacrament, Ontario
Jan 2-10	Mt Angel Region XII Bishop Retreat

Priestly Ordination Anniversaries

Congratulations to the following clergy as they celebrate their ordination anniversaries in December.

Rev. Paul Antao, SDB, La Pine	Dec 18, 1999
Rev. Thomas Philip, OSH, Lakeview	Dec 28, 1998
Rev. Tomy Chowaran, Hood River	Dec 29, 1999
Rev. Thankachan Joseph, SDB, Heppner	Dec 31, 2002
Rev. Saji Kumbungal Thomas, CMI, La Grande	Dec 31, 2005
Reverend Anish Philip, OSH, Nyssa	Dec 31, 2009

We are most grateful for the years of service of all our Priests and Bishop. Please keep them in your prayers.



Bishop’s Annual Appeal Update

Thank you to all who have participated so far in the 2020 Bishop’s Annual Appeal *Faith and Family*. Funds received through the Appeal are essential to the functioning of diocesan ministries that impact the daily

spiritual lives of people in our parishes. As of December 15, we have received gifts and pledges from 1,725 families, achieving 100% of our \$412,748 target goal.

We are happy to recognize these parishes and missions who **exceeded** their parish goal.

Many thanks for your participation!

Holy Family—Arock	St. Kateri—Warm Springs
Holy Family—Christmas Valley	St. Katherine—Enterprise
Holy Trinity—Sunriver	St. John the Baptist—Grass Valley
Our Lady of Angels—Hermiston	St. Joseph—Prineville
Our Lady of Mt Carmel—Chiloquin	St. Mary—Wasco
Our Lady of the Valley—LaGrande	St. Mary—Elgin
Sacred Heart—Klamath Falls	St. Mary—Pendleton
Sacred Heart—Union	St. Mary—Hood River
Sacred Heart—Athena	St. Patrick—Vale
St. Catherine—Fossil	St. Patrick—Heppner
St. Edward—Sisters	St. Patrick—Lakeview
St. Elizabeth—John Day	St. Patrick—Madras
St. Francis—Arlington	St. Pius X—Klamath Falls
St. Francis de Sales—Baker City	St. Pius X—Wallowa
St. Francis of Assisi—Bend	St. Richard—Adel
St. Helen—Pilot Rock	St. Thomas—Redmond
St. James—Bly	St. Thomas—Crane
St. John—Condon	St. Thomas—Plush
St. John—Paisley	St. William—Heppner



Christmas Traditions Are So Important—Especially This Year

While Christmas will definitely be different this year—and it might be tempting to give into the coronavirus dread and forget your family traditions— it may not be the best option. While we will need to adapt to local restrictions and ensure our safety, we can still hold onto some of the familiar traditions or even create new ones.

Christmas traditions to enjoy— even this year:

- * Take a car ride and enjoy the Christmas lights. Enjoy a drive-through light show or a car ride through a neighborhood decorated with Christmas lights. Also, don't forget to keep note of your favorite places to go see the lights so you won't forget to see them next year.
- * Create your own light show. If you don't want to go to a light show, you can create your own light show by decorating your home with various Christmas lights and decorations.
- * Bake Christmas cookies. Host a virtual baking competition with your friends or family and see who can bake the best cookies, or you could have a baking competition with family members living in your home.
- * Host a Secret Santa with friends. You can still enjoy Secret Santa with friends by delivering gifts to your friends home and dropping them off at the door without any contact.
- * Have a Christmas movie night. Have a Christmas movie marathon or a month long event where you watch one holiday movie every week until Christmas.
- * Be creative with alternatives to “store bought” gifts. Parents can help children make homemade gifts such as craft items, handwritten cards, baked goods, poems, memory books, etc.
- * Watch online performances. Gather together with your household members and watch online performances such as *The Nutcracker*.
- * Write a Christmas letter to friends and family. Especially this year, people may enjoy updates from friends and family.
- * Track Santa. Finally, don't forget to track Santa as he makes his trip around the world at NORADSanta.org.
- * Mass. If you are unable to attend Mass or church services, check with your Church to see if you are able to watch services online.

Dr. Martina Paglia, a psychologist at the International Psychology clinic, explained that traditions are more than just the simple act of putting up a Christmas tree or making gingerbread – these simple acts provide comfort, make you feel secure and safe, and allow you to bond with your loved ones. It is important to take time to think about which traditions you can carry on through this pandemic that will bring you and your family comfort. It could be as simple as putting up the Christmas tree together or watching a movie like *A Charlie Brown Christmas*. Most importantly be safe, adapt to change, and hold onto what brings you joy.





Saint Vincent de Paul

A Letter of Gratitude

Saint Vincent de Paul, Redmond Conference extends a heartfelt thank you to our business and individual sponsors and volunteers.

Your continued support made it possible to **serve 16,729 people** this past year.

Volunteers donated 5,212 hours of service to help SVDP provide **240,000 meals** and critical monetary assistance to our neighbors in need.

October 2019 - September 2020

Food / Meals	\$305,385
Clothing/Household	\$144,988
Rent	\$ 47,726
Utilities	\$ 24,328
Other Assistance	<u>\$ 15,945</u>
Total Assistance	\$538,372

Deschutes County families showed a tremendous outpouring of generosity to the regional fire victims through donations of **26,838 pounds of food, 4 truckloads of clothing and household items, and \$45,000 in monetary support and store gift cards.** Your donations to date have helped **500 fire victims.**

During a year of uncertainty, the kindness and concern for others shines through as a beacon of hope relieving suffering for those in need. May God bless you abundantly for your generosity.

**St. Vincent de Paul
Redmond Conference**

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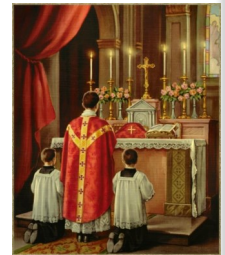
THE TRADITIONAL LATIN MASS IN CENTRAL OREGON

The Extraordinary Form (Latin) Mass is offered every Sunday at 9:30 a.m. at St. Francis of Assisi Historic Church. All Masses, until further notice, are Low Masses. Confession is available before Mass from 9-9:30 a.m.

Christmas Mass is scheduled for 10:00 a.m. and will be a Sung Mass. Please make reservations.

Weekday and Christmas Masses at St. Mary's Chapel (Cascade View Retreat Center)

Date	Time
12/21/20	8:30 am
12/22/20	12 pm
12/23/20	8:30 am
12/24/20	8:30 am
12/25/20	12am Midnight Mass 7 am Dawn Mass 10 am Day Mass (St. Francis Historic Church)
12/26/20	8:30 am
12/27/20	9:30 am (St. Francis Historic Church)



Except for the two Christmas Masses at the Retreat Center, weekday Mass times can change without prior notice. We apologize for the inconvenience.

Weekday Masses are offered at the Diocesan Retreat Center in Powell Butte at 7:30 AM, unless otherwise noted.

Only individuals receiving Communion should come to the Communion Rail. Those children who must accompany their parents to the Communion Rail should hold a finger over their mouths to indicate they are not to receive Communion.

The Latin Mass is sponsored by the SSGG, which makes the Latin Mass possible. St. Francis Parish graciously allows the SSGG to use this Historic Church for Latin Masses and the Sacraments, but does not provide financial support. Please make checks for support of the Latin Mass out to "Society of St. Gregory the Great" or "SSGG" and put them into the red box at the rear of the church. Thank you for your support.

WHAT THE CARES ACT MEANS FOR CHARITABLE GIVING

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act creates two temporary changes to the tax treatment of such donations. One is a universal deduction targeted primarily at the 90+% of standard deduction taxpayers, and the other is meant to incentivize the remaining high-income givers and corporations.

\$300

Universal Deduction
for Donations Up to
\$300

For the 9 out of 10 people who no longer itemize their charitable giving, the CARES Act will allow these individual taxpayers to deduct donations to charity of up to \$300 on their 2020 federal tax return, even though they take the standard deduction. Married-filing-jointly taxpayers will get an above-the-line deduction of up to \$600.

60%

For those donors who are still able to itemize their deductions, and therefore directly write off gifts to charity, the current deduction cap is 60% of adjusted gross income. Corporations are able to deduct charitable donations up to 10% of taxable income.

*The 60% of AGI limit is for giving to 501(c)(3) public charities. The deductibility of gifts to 501(c)(3) private foundations is capped at 30%, and was not included in this legislation.

WHAT ABOUT THE IRA QUALIFIED CHARITABLE DISTRIBUTION (QCD)?

The CARES Act did not change the rules around the QCD, which allows individuals over 70½ years old to donate up to \$100,000 in IRA assets directly to charity annually, without taking the distribution into taxable income.

However, remember that under the CARES Act an individual can elect to deduct 100 percent of their AGI for cash charitable contributions. This effectively affords individuals over 59½ years old the benefits similar to a QCD; they can take a cash distribution from their IRA, contribute the cash to charity, and may completely offset tax attributable to the distribution by taking a charitable deduction in an amount up to 100 percent of their AGI for the tax year.

Source: Fidelity Charitable