

(Food for thought - Gospel: Luke 3: 10-18.)

“What are we to do?”



The crowds asked John an Advent question: "What are we to do?" Like people in every age, they were beset with fear, anxiety, and discouragement.

We have as many reasons as they to be afraid, to be filled with concern about health, economics and social evils. We are constantly faced with a barrage of images that show us - quite emphatically - how broken our world has become. Every day we are confronted with aggression, war, competition, greed, and the lust for property and power. There seems to be far too much for us to handle anymore: reminders of how vulnerable we really are; the growing number of the poor, homeless and

displaced, not only worldwide, but here at home as well; the effect of climate change and seeming unwillingness of leadership to do anything about it... how inept we really have become at being "brother's keeper."

Today's Scripture Readings give us a clear, precise and practical answer: "Shout for joy . . . exult with all your heart! Have no fear... be not discouraged!" (Zephaniah 3)

Paul tells us: "Rejoice in the Lord always! Dismiss all anxiety from your minds. Then God's own peace will stand guard over your hearts and minds." (Phil.: 4)

John the Baptist answers very specifically in a different vein: "Give to him who has nothing; exact nothing unjustly; do not bully anyone; be content with your pay." (Luke: 3)

It is the face of Jesus we see when we look at the poor, the sick and the homeless. It is face of Jesus we see when confronted with troubles, suffering and failure. We see His beauty and power in all of the good things; we sense His crucified presence when touched by pain and sorrow; we are energized by the power of His resurrected presence when we are buried by weakness, defeat, or death in any form. Although the seasons change, our faith, like the sun, must remain constant.

In answer to our advent prayer: "What ought we to do?" the Church cries out: "Rejoice! The Lord is in your midst! God's own peace will stand guard over your hearts."



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