

# WORD FROM THE PASTOR

## ADVENT TIME OF HOPE INTO OUR DESPAIR



The My brothers and sisters, the scriptures for this Sunday tell us of Baruch calling his people to joy and hope. The people have been driven into exile and humiliated. But he will find happiness and freedom. It is this call to hope that we hear in the first reading: "Cast off thy garment of sorrow and misery and clothe thyself with the garment of God's glory for evermore."

Today's Gospel is a response to this announcement: it returns us to a very specific historical situation. Luke puts before the scene all the political and religious figures of the time: the Roman emperor Tiberius, his representative in Judea Pontius Pilate, Herod the prince of Galilee and other minor kings. He also quotes the religious authorities, Annas and Caiaphas. Face these prestigious personages, we have a man altogether simple; he's called Jean; he lives neither in the palaces nor in the temple but in the wilderness. That's where the Word of God is addressed to him.

"The word of God was spoken to John in the wilderness." In saying this, the evangelist has something important to make us discover in the time of John the Baptist, it was in the wilderness that the Word of God could best be heard. It's important for each of us today: in the manner of John the Baptist, we are all invited into the wilderness to understand what God has to say to us today. That's how we prepare his way.

Imported the one and the other into the whirlwind of life, we must make moments of desert if we are to remain men and women of inwardness, if we simply want to remain believers. Christmas is the visit of God into our hearts, but if we are away, the visit will not take place. To understand, we must listen. That's why John goes to the desert. It's in the silence that we begin to understand. God doesn't ask to speak to anyone's heart.

It is in all these deserts that the words of John the Baptist remind us: "Prepare the way of the Lord... Make His paths straight! To answer John the Baptist's invitation, we must sweep the ravines of our fears, bring down the mountains of our prejudices, we must smooth the paths of our personal and collective egos and quiet ourselves. This conversion to which John the Baptist calls us is really a change of our whole life. To prepare for Christmas, is first to welcome the coming Jesus, to listen to His Holy Spirit, to go into the wilderness to better hear His call. Through the Eucharist we gather every Sunday, He comes to enlighten us and give us life. Pray that He may grow in us His divine life, peace, love, and wisdom.

**Very Rev. Fr. Lucien Eugene Pierre Ph.D., Pastor, VF**  
**- December 8, 2024**