



## John the Baptist through the Vincentian Lens

*When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offence at me."*

*As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written, 'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.' Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." (Matthew 11:2-11)*

The beautiful season of Advent is a time of watchful waiting and preparation for the coming of Jesus. It is also a season of hope and prayer. As Vincentians, Advent offers us an opportunity to encounter Christ in the marginalized and those in need in more profound ways. Our Vincentian spirituality reminds us true preparation for Christ's coming involves attention to both prayer and service. As we journey through this Advent season, we can be mindful of the words by St. Vincent de Paul, who continually encouraged his followers to live their faith in concrete ways.

John the Baptist is a central character in the Advent Season who guides us with faith as we wait in joyful hope for the birth of Jesus. He was admired and trusted as a person of holiness and integrity. Jesus declared John the Baptist the greatest of all prophets. His faith was known through his words and deeds. Many people went to hear him, to be challenged by him and to have their lives changed by his message. Our Vincentian vocation parallels John the Baptist as we are also called to prepare the way for Jesus to come into our own hearts. John the Baptist reminds us sometimes the best way we can prepare for Christmas is to simplify. Building the kingdom of God with zeal and compassion like John the Baptist reflects our Vincentian virtues. John the Baptist's sole mission, his purpose is to prepare for Jesus a people capable of receiving the message of the Kingdom of God. John embodies a true concern for others, a beautiful example for our Vincentian lives. Each of us, in our Vincentian vocation can do great things like John the Baptist. This time of the year, calls us in special ways to provide for our neighbours in need by distributing Christmas hampers, providing food and necessities through our SSVP stores, as well as engaging in special projects. In the variety of creative ways, we strive to meet the needs of our neighbours at Christmas, we are bringing Christ's light to others. Like John the Baptist, we are called to show others the way to Christ. When we see the face of Christ in those we serve and respond generously in love, especially during this time, we are living out our Vincentian vocation. St. Vincent de Paul tells us the person of Jesus must be central in our lives, as it was for John the Baptist.

### Reflection Questions

1. In what ways can John the Baptist be an example to you in your Vincentian life?
2. How is your Vincentian work helping you to prepare for the joy of Christmas morning?
3. How can you exhibit more fully the Vincentian spirit of compassion, simplicity, and service during this Advent season?

**Let us pray...** God of love, be the light that guides us on our Advent journey towards Christmas. Help us walk in Your light and share it with others. We pray for the grace to recognize Your son, Jesus in all

those we meet like John the Baptist did. Grant us simplicity, zeal and compassion in all we do. As we approach the celebration of Christmas, may this special time transform our hearts and the world around us. Amen.

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For those interested in contributing spiritual reflections, please email [jose.torres@rogers.com](mailto:jose.torres@rogers.com). Also, for reflections that may be used in your group meeting's spirituality segment, please check out: [Monthly Reflections - Society of Saint Vincent de Paul - National Council of Canada](#)