

## Who Are You?

**S**o far the readings for Sundays in Advent have shown God leading the people into a new way of life—a way of righteousness and loyalty, of honesty and responsibility. Today the readings show the people beginning to see that the accomplishment of this transformation would come through the leadership of one individual. Who might that person be?

The passage from Isaiah describes a prophet, one anointed by God and bringing good news to the poor. When the Baptist appears on the scene in John’s Gospel, people wonder if it might be him. He insists he is not the one, nor is he a prophet. Then, “Who are you?” (John 1:19) Recalling the passage from Isaiah read on the First Sunday of Advent, John tells them he is the one repairing the road, getting it ready for the long-awaited one to arrive. He adds that his baptism is a baptism of repentance. He is readying them to be what Paul describes as “perfectly holy...blameless for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

We now see that these readings are preparing us for salvation. We are now told that such divine graciousness will be inaugurated by an individual, one who has not yet been identified. Will it be a powerful king? A mighty warrior? A spectacular prophet? Those in the time before Christ didn’t know. We now know that it will be someone powerful enough to initiate a revolutionary change in the lives of the entire people. Now waiting gets exciting.

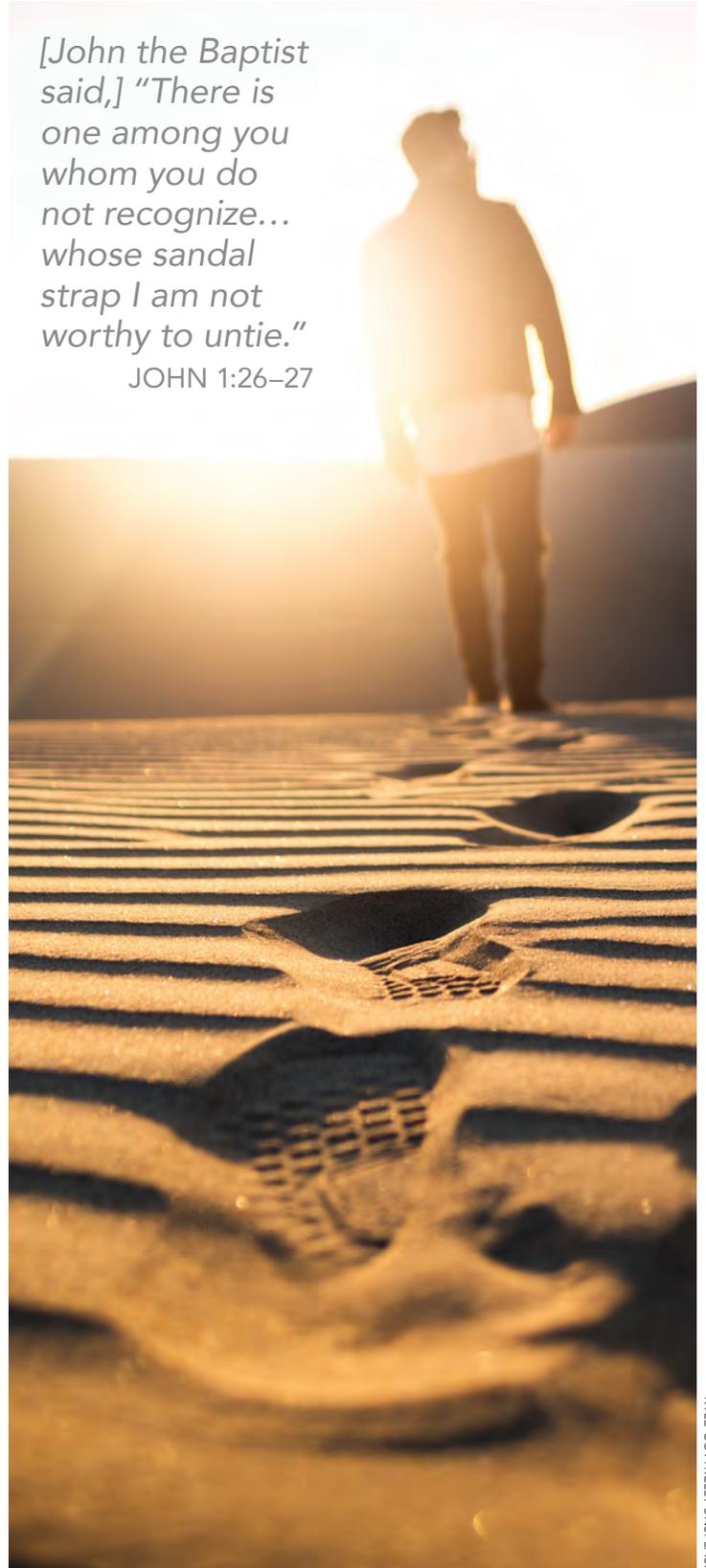
—Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

### FOR *Reflection*

- \* How might you envision this long-awaited one? What do you think the nation needs in a leader?
- \* What kind of revolutionary transformation do you think we need today?

[John the Baptist said,] “There is one among you whom you do not recognize... whose sandal strap I am not worthy to untie.”

JOHN 1:26–27



# Dear Padre,

## Who was John the Baptist?

**W**hat we know about John the Baptist comes from a combination of Scripture and Church traditions that evolved during and after the writing of the Scriptures of the New Testament.

John's parents were Zechariah, who was a priest in the Jerusalem Temple, and Elizabeth, who was related to Mary. The angel Gabriel told Zechariah that his wife would bear a son, even though she was quite old. It is believed that John was born in the region of Ain Karim, southwest of Jerusalem. When he was in his early twenties, he was a member of the Qumran community, and later was a hermit in the desert. John began his public ministry in his late twenties in the Jordan River Valley. His preaching followed the long line of Jewish prophets who preached against the evils of the day and demanded inner repentance and outer baptism as a sign of that repentance.

John continued his preaching in the Jordan Valley even after encountering Jesus. Eventually John was arrested by Herod Antipas and imprisoned at Machaerus Fortress by the Dead Sea. He was beheaded at the request of Salome, the daughter of Herodias, and buried at Sebaste, in Samaria. After John's death, many of his disciples followed Jesus, including Andrew and John.

John, whose name means "God is gracious," is usually represented in pictures holding a long slender cross with a small lamb partially hidden behind him.

—Fr. Paul J. Coury, CSsR | [Sundaybulletin@Liguori.org](mailto:Sundaybulletin@Liguori.org)



NIKOLAUS OF HAGUENAU AND MATTHIAS GRÜNEWALD: JOHN THE BAPTIST. DETAIL OF THE SENHEIM ALTARPIECE

## Calendar

### Monday

DECEMBER 14  
Advent Weekday  
Nm 24:2-7, 15-17a  
Mt 21:23-27

### Tuesday

DECEMBER 15  
Advent Weekday  
Zep 3:1-2, 9-13  
Mt 21:28-32

### Wednesday

DECEMBER 16  
Advent Weekday  
Is 45:6c-8, 18, 21c-25  
Lk 7:18b-23

### Thursday

DECEMBER 17  
Advent Weekday  
Gn 49:2, 8-10  
Mt 1:1-17

### Friday

DECEMBER 18  
Advent Weekday  
Jer 23:5-8  
Mt 1:18-25

### Saturday

DECEMBER 19  
Advent Weekday  
Jgs 13:2-7, 24-25a  
Lk 1:5-25

### Sunday

DECEMBER 20  
Fourth Sunday  
of Advent  
2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16  
Rom 16:25-27  
Lk 1:26-38



## A WORD FROM *Pope Francis*

*Anxieties, difficulties, and sufferings permeate our lives, and so many times the reality around us seems to be inhospitable and arid, like the desert....But the words of [John] the Baptist reveal that our joy rests on the certainty that this desert is inhabited: "Among you there is one whom you do not know."*

—ANGELUS, GAUDETE SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2017