

HOMILY 2ND Sunday of ADVENT
December 6, 2020

Last week I spoke about a form of prayer called lectio divina, or praying with Sacred Scripture. Today I want to demonstrate it for you. Get relaxed and close your eyes. I am going to read the Gospel passage, and then I am going to use my imagination and retell the story, embellishing it. Then I am going to end with a few questions. When you hear a question that resonates with you, stay with that question as I will give you a couple of minutes of silence to pray about it. [read the Gospel passage]

We have been waiting for the Messiah to come for many years. I am really familiar with the Book of the Prophet Isaiah. We pray with this scripture all of the time. It says that God will be sending a messenger ahead of the Messiah. That messenger will be a voice crying out in the desert. He will tell us to prepare the way of the Lord. People have been talking about this John the Baptist. He is out in the desert and telling people to repent. Some of my friends are telling me that John the Baptist may be that messenger that the Prophet Isaiah was talking about. Could it be that the Messiah is going to be coming about very soon? I decided to go and check him out myself. There is a crowd of people gathered here by the Jordan River. Now I can see John the Baptist. He is this big guy wearing a scratchy

looking tunic with a belt around his waist. He looks kind of scary to me. He looks like he has been out here in the desert for a long time. His hair is long and all matted and wild and his skin is sunburned and rough. He does not look as though he has bathed in a long time. He is calling out to everyone to repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of their sins. People seem to be lining up to be baptized by him. Why are people following him? He does not look like someone that I would want to follow. He looks pretty rough and common. He is walking in my direction. He is looking right at me. He is shouting at me now, but I cannot understand what he is saying. I want to run away but I cannot move. He is only a few feet away from me now. He has dark eyes that seem to be looking right into my soul. He tells me that I need to repent. It is as if he can see all of my sins, but that is not possible. He tells me that I should be baptized with water for the forgiveness of my sins. I cannot move. I do not know if I want to be baptized. Someone in the crowd asks him if he is the Messiah. He says: "No. The Messiah will come after me. He is much greater than me. I am just baptizing with water, but he will baptize with the Holy Spirit. Who is the Holy Spirit? I have never heard of the Holy Spirit. This John the Baptist looks really common. He does not look like the type of person who would know the Messiah. But there is something

extraordinary about him. And a lot of people are lining up to be baptized by him. I do not know if I want to do that.

Are you ready to acknowledge your sins? Even the ones that you have kept secret, that you have never told to anyone, that you do not even want to admit to yourself? Acknowledging your sins is the first step to repentance. If you admit your sins you also have to change your ways. Change is scary. Are you ready to change your ways? Jesus sent John the Baptist to prepare for his coming two thousand years ago. Maybe John the Baptist is telling you that you need to repent and prepare for Jesus to come into your life in a new way on Christmas. What do you need to do to prepare for Christmas? Are you ready to move closer to Jesus or are you stuck where you are at?