

John 1:6-8, 19-28

"I AM NOT THE CHRIST"

Third Sunday of
Advent 2023

A VOICE crying out in the desert

Nothing but a voice, trying to find the right ways to broaden the expectations of people's hearts. A humble witness to the Messiah's arrival. Someone who prepares the conditions for it.

The baptism administered by John is a fitting rite to put words like *death*, *light* and *hope* back into our vocabulary. The baptism John performs is a very human rite to prepare the people for the coming of the Messiah.

John is a *voice* and a *witness*, which we too must become today.

Even in the desert, he is a *voice*. That is, he speaks of One to come. He delivers a message that will quickly fade away if it does not dance on the lips of the people.

John must find a way to tell them about God's extraordinary adventure in the heart of humanity. He is the *voice* of a Life that must be proclaimed in all its poignant, complex beauty.

To be a witness does not mean to be perfect; it means to be visible and credible. It means demonstrating that our way of interpreting life is the fruit of ardent love.

The priests and Levites intervene violently. "Who are you?" they demand. They have come from Jerusalem and they want answers.

John's answer becomes more and more synthesized and essential: "I am not the Christ," he says.

These events take place on the far side of the Jordan, where John is waiting for the Messiah on the banks of a river that has to be crossed. He too feels the need to immerse himself in its waters and re-emerge to new life.

