

### **December 14, 2014 Look to Him**

My dear brothers and sisters, several months ago my brother received a wedding invitation by mail, which was unlike any other he had received in his entire life. The invitation included three words in bold print letters and enclosed by quotation marks. The words were a reference to Christ. The very same words appeared in their wedding program on the day the two were joined in marriage.

#### "LOOK TO HIM"

The engaged couple were deeply committed Evangelical Christians. Even on their wedding day Christ was first in their life and not each other.

In the gospel reading we are once again in the company of John the Baptist, a man dedicated to God. Indeed, he is a man sent from God (Jn 1:6) He is the great saint of the Advent season. In the fourth gospel, John appears on the scene briefly and, in a flash, disappears. His only purpose is to point out Jesus, the one promised by the Old Testament prophets, of whom John is the last.

Pope Benedict writes that John's mission is "to open the door to God". He "decreased" so that Jesus, the longed for messiah, could increase. It is as if John had said, "Look to Him".

It is interesting to note that in John's gospel, John the Baptist is portrayed as one of those who witness to Jesus. "Witness" is a popular word for the Evangelist, it occurs no less than thirty times in his gospel. John the Baptist was indeed a credible witness. He suffered a martyr's death. John is the opening act, and not the featured star.

Perhaps some of you may recall the first performance at the Pepsi Arena in Albany. The opening act was the talented duo of Steve Lawrence and Edie Gorme. They were not the headliners. That was reserved for the featured performer, Frank Sinatra, otherwise known as "The Voice". For many months people in our area anticipated with joy the arrival of the legendary entertainer. And they were willing to pay big money for the opportunity to hear him sing in person.

What lessons can we derive from today's gospel? First, Jesus needs to be pointed out in our secular culture. More and more Americans do not know Christ. Secondly, witnesses to Jesus are needed. We must have more disciples of Jesus who are courageous in rebelling against our culture which the late Pontiff, John Paul II referred to as a "culture of death". Finally, we are reminded that Advent is a time of anticipated joy. St. Paul exhorts us to "rejoice in the Lord always".

The third Sunday of Advent is traditionally known as Gaudete Sunday. Gaudete is the Latin word for rejoice. We have every reason to be a joyful people. Christ is in our midst today.

John the Baptist is a friend of the bridegroom. He compares himself to the Best Man who, upon the completion of his mission, must give way to the bridegroom, Jesus Christ!

As Christmas approaches, let us "look to Him" We will never be disappointed!

Amen