

Commentary on the Gospel for Tue, Dec 23rd 2014

Century old traditions and customs are good. But they need not be perpetual. If needed, they can be changed and newness can emerge. This is today's message for us. If Elizabeth had given prime importance to traditions, then we would be calling John the Baptist as Zechariah. Basing on tradition, the relatives and neighbours of Elizabeth wanted to name the child as Zechariah. When Elizabeth protested and suggested John, they still objected by pointing out in a protesting manner that she was breaking tradition: "None of your relatives has this name." They still tried by appealing to the child's father. When he too categorically stated, "His name is John," their insistence was turned into complying amazement. Certainly tradition has its value but sometimes even sacred traditions and customs must be set aside for something new. Because it is a tradition, there is no need to practise it without a critical look. When God inspires us to break the traditions and look for something new, we should be open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit as Elizabeth and Zechariah were.

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