

## **Commentary on the Gospel for Sat, Jun 24th 2017**

Solemnity of the Nativity of Saint John the Baptist

Today's second reading from Acts and Luke's Gospel remind us of the role that John the Baptist had in preparing the way for Jesus. "Behold, one is coming after me; I am not worthy to unfasten the sandals of his feet."

My meditation about writing this reflection consistently brought me back to the lessons from a dear colleague who for many years had the most difficult job in our dental school (and indeed in any dental school). Dr. Jim Howard served as the Associate Dean for Clinical Services and in his role, he was at the intersection of dealing with our students, patients and staff in an often emotionally charged and at times chaotic environment. Amid this stress, he unfailingly reminded all of us, in every interaction with each other to seek to see God in all situations and especially in the faces of the people we have been brought in front of to serve.

A logical question of course is what does this profound charisma have to do with John the Baptist? For me, these readings compelled me to ask "Where can one find the message of John the Baptist today?" The answer may be in all of those around us—if we seek to understand, to listen, and to see clearly the face of God in all we meet. As we open our hearts to the message God, in concert with the Holy Spirit, has for us in the presence of those we interact with and serve, we can hear the message of John.

But as Jim would remind us, it doesn't end there. Reinforced by the Holy Spirit, we have the obligation to proclaim the Good News as John did in his day—we must do in these times.

Thank you, Jim, for your years of service and for the example of God's love for us all.

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