

Commentary on the Gospel for Wed, Dec 19th 2018

Today's readings introduce us to the beginnings of two figures whose stories fascinated me in my youth, that of Samson and John the Baptist. While reflecting on these stories my mind always circles back to two themes, God speaking to us and silence, with both themes tightly intertwined.

In both narratives God chose angels to deliver good news to the recipients. How wonderful and easy would it would be if God sent messengers directly to us? Though that is not happening today, God is not silent and is still speaking to us. But it can be hard to hear him with all the noise and distractions in our world. How can God's word be heard with smartphones tempting us to be connected 24x7, hundreds of television channels seeking our attention and other commitments in our busy lives. In today's gospel Zechariah heard the angel's message in the quiet of the sanctuary, and I find it important to find similar quiet spaces whether in my home, in nature or a church to really be open to hearing God's message and to reflect on His word.

The second part of this theme of silence relates to how Zechariah went mute after he received the good news and was unable to share it. It struck me how many choose to make themselves mute when it comes to proclaiming their faith. In a world where so many have no problem easily sharing their political views, sports opinions, or how to cook dinner, I ask myself why has society made an open proclamation of faith seem unwelcomed and opinions discerned from one's faith seem less valuable than others when discussed?

Therefore, as we enter the last days of Advent and approach the birth of Jesus, I will be challenging myself, and invite you, to consciously turn off those devices and find some quiet time to listen to how God is speaking to you through the birth of His Son Jesus Christ. I also invite all to be open to being a witness of your faith to others, seeking opportunities to assist those in need and being bold in openly thanking and recognizing God's role in your life and His inspiration for the good works we may do.

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