



Advent Message from Fr. Laurence - Week 2



In the course of his preaching he said, "Someone is following me,

someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to kneel down and undo the strap of his sandals. I have baptised you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit." (Mk 1:8)

To live in hope. This sounds rather deflating to us today who are used to instant gratification. It seems to mean either being reconciled to a continuous lack of fulfillment or to live in a kind of quiet desperation ? just getting through to the end. This isn't what the "virtue" ? the strength - of hope that meditation nurtures is about at all.

Hope blooms as hopes die. Hopes are veiled desires or fantasies which we use as substitutes for reality or as defences against disappointments and sufferings. Often we have to tremble on the brink of despair and the evacuation of desire before discovering the meaning of hope. Before we get to that brink we start clutching at false hopes. The John the Baptists of our lives ? those who alone give authentic consolation ? are not harbingers of doom but preachers of reality.

But at the graced moment of emptiness we are visited by hope that enlightens us about the meaning of the process we are passing through. Even if we cannot see the light at the end of the tunnel yet we know ? with a kind of night-vision ? that we are on the way and even the feeling of failure or of being forgotten are part of the process that will flower in the light of love.

For those who live in hope (this is what Advent is about learning) there is no final closure or shutdown. As the old rabbi said God does not expect us to succeed but we are not allowed to give up. This is not only human wisdom about the need to endure. It is a disclosure about the infinite simplicity of God.

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