



Sacred Heart Parish Bulletin

Mass: 4:00 pm – Saturdays
Fr. John Yake, I. V. Dei
(902) 535-2053 – Fax: 535-3127

January 14, 2023

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Sunday Readings, Cycle A:

The **First Reading** is taken from the *Book of the Prophet Isaiah* 49:3, 5-6 and is the second of the "suffering servant" prophecies, found in Isaiah. These were prophecies uttered during the Babylonian exile to encourage the Jewish exiles to persevere in their trust in Yahweh, who would soon liberate them from Babylon, and eventually send them the long-expected Messiah, promised to Abraham.

The **Second Reading** is from the *First Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians* 1:1-3. The opening verses of this letter have been chosen for the reading because they show the prophecy, read in the first lesson, as fulfilled among the pagans, as well as emphasizing the purpose of the Messiah's coming: the sanctification and true enlightenment of all nations.

The **Gospel** is from *St. John* 1:29-34. The pages of the Gospel present John the Baptist as a symbolic example of a 'bridegroom's friend', as Christ's excellent and exemplary witness. The Baptist's pre-eminent witness was affirmed in two ways: firstly with regard to the content of his testimony and secondly with respect to its style.

With regard to the content of his testimony, the Baptist identified Jesus as *'the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world'* (Jn 1:29). Anticipating Jesus' messianic and salvific role, each of the four evangelists start their

Gospels with the Baptist's words. The Lamb refers to the idea of salvation. The Lamb is the gift of liberation that, following the flight from Egypt, the Israelites sacrificed to the Lord. The Lamb recalls the servant of the Lord, the messianic image described by the Prophet Isaiah, *'like a lamb led to the slaughter-house, like a sheep dumb before its shearers'* (Is 53:7). The Lamb recalls the image of the Victorious Lamb in the Book of the Apocalypse who at the end of time will definitively destroy evil and sin. John the Baptist is therefore, an authoritative witness who knew Jesus' exact identity and why He came amongst men.

With regard to John the Baptist's style, St John's Gospel (cfr Jn 3:28-29) presents St John the Baptist through the image of the *'bridegroom's friend'*. He gives witness, yet is not positioned central to the events that are unfolding. His testimony is totally centralised on Christ. John indicates the presence of the Lord and then steps into the margins. *'I am not the Christ'* and he goes on to affirm *'I am the one who has been sent to go in front of him. 'It is the bridegroom who has the bride; and yet the bridegroom's friend, who stands there and listens to him, is filled with joy at the bridegroom's voice. This is the joy I feel, and it is complete. He must grow greater, I must grow less.'* (Jn 3:28-30)

Today's Gospel offers us an eloquent example to imitate, so that we can also become Christ's authoritative witnesses. A believer can only give an authoritative witness if it coexists in perfect harmony with two of the Baptist's evangelical qualities. Firstly, knowledge of Christ that is cultivated through prayer, the sacramental and ecclesial life, reading good books and edifying friendships. Secondly, the constant attributes of a

'bridegroom's friend' who goes in search of the Groom through the virtue of humility because always, in everyone's life, Christ must increase and we must decrease!

—From *the Dicastery for the Clergy*

Collection January 01, 2023

Envelopes	\$135.00
Loose	\$20.00
January 1st	\$20.00
	\$175.00

NOTICES:

1: All are invited to the upcoming first Ultreya meeting after the Christmas break! Will be taking place Thursday, January 26, 2023, at Our Lady of Fatima Parish Hall, McMahon room in the basement. Start time is 7:30pm and the event will be livestreamed on the Cursillo Facebook page.

2: T.J. Tracey will be hosting an old-fashioned pancake breakfast at its new location, 6 Churchill Drive, Sydney, 902-539-7175 January 28, 2023, 8:00 – 11:30 am. All proceeds will be going to Loaves & Fishes. We do this annually at our location in Glace Bay for the local food bank there and it is very well received. It would be nice to support the local food bank here as well.

3: The 2022 receipts are either in the mail or delivered at mass