

# Taking Our Hearts to the Lord

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Scripture Sharing Group Resource, Advent 2015, Week 2.

**Reader 1:** A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke (Luke 3:1-6)

In the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar's reign, when Pontius was governor of Judaea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of the lands of Ituraea and Trachonitis, Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, during the pontificate of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah, in the wilderness. He went through the whole Jordan district proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the sayings of the prophet Isaiah:

A voice cries in the wilderness:

Prepare a way for the Lord,

make his paths straight.

Every valley will be filled in,

every mountain and hill be laid low,

winding ways will be straightened and rough roads made smooth.

And all humankind shall see the salvation of God.

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Silence**

**Leader:** Let us read the Gospel passage aloud together.

**Everyone:** A Reading from the Holy Gospel ....

**Silence**

**Leader:** Let us listen to a short reflection on this Gospel passage.

**Reader 2:** Reflection on the Gospel

Only in recent times have I succeeded in getting behind John the Baptist's austerity so as to revere the sacred presence, working in, with and through him. It is the same sacred presence pervading your life and mine – the sacred presence that seeks everyone's ultimate fulfilment and that continues to encourage us each time we ponder a sacred text such as this.

Today, as I pray with this text, I am full of admiration for John, not only for his ministry but equally for his initial *yeses* to God's word: the yes by which he placed himself beyond distracting voices (the wilderness), the yes by which he assented to give Jesus greater prominence than himself.

Today millions of Christians, prompted by and in union with the same sacred presence, follow John's example of fidelity to God's word. Like John they daily dedicate their lives to helping others encounter Christ in situations no less harsh or challenging. To contend with the cold face of aggressive secularisation in one's family and community or to risk imprisonment and death for the love of Christ and His Church requires a special grace. Let us ask our gracious Lord to bestow it abundantly and let us give thanks too that no one is ever alone in such work. The sacred presence, better known to us as the Holy Spirit, always always accompanies.

**Silence**

**Leader:** I invite you to share any thought or consideration prompted by the Gospel passage and /or the reflection.

**Sharing**

**Leader:** Let us return to our Advent Prayer.

*(Go to page 28.)*