***Reader 1:*** A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke: (Lk 3:10-18)

When all the people asked John, “What must we do?” he answered, “If anyone has two coats he must share with the person who has none, and the one with something to eat must do the same”. There were tax collectors too who came for baptism, and these said, “Master, what must we do?” He said to them, “Exact no more than your rate.” Some soldiers asked him in their turn, “What about us? What must we do?” He said to them, “No intimidation! No extortion! Be content with your pay!”

A feeling of expectancy had grown among the people, who were beginning to think that John might be the Christ, so John declared before them all, “I baptize you with water, but someone is coming, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to undo the strap of his sandals; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fan is in his hand to clear the threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his barn; but the chaff he will burn in a fire that will never go out.” As well as this, there were many other things he said to exhort the people and to announce the Good News to them.

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

Every year the advertising industry invests billions in getting our attention and they have become expert at it. One of the things they understand is that we desire constant happiness for ourselves and others. The effectiveness of the industry, however, is not measured by human happiness or well-being but sales. Every advert also carries a subliminal message “Spend, spend, spend” … and not just for Christmas! In fact the industry passed the fruit of their labours in relation to Christmas over to the media months ago and are now busy working on how to encourage us take summer holidays etc..
Today’s Gospel is also centred in human happiness and well-being, but not just our own. Through John the Baptist’s preaching we are invited to review our relationships with our personal belongings, our income provider and with persons we are called to serve. It reminds us that a truly good life is forever tied with justice, and that we usurp our true nature each time we make god’s of ourselves.
Much of this teaching is not unique to Christianity. Indeed I am reminded of Mahatma Gandhi’s teaching “Live simply so that others may simply live”. For us, however, there is a related question: If we are not true to these demands are we being true to our baptism and our identity as adopted children of the Father?
 Silence

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

Sharing

***Leade***r: Let us return to our Advent Prayer.

 *Group returns to page 35 of Advent booklet.*