

---

10 SATURDAY

Saturday, 2<sup>nd</sup> Week of Advent

Sirach 48: 1-4, 9-11  
Ps 79: 2-3, 15-16, 18-19  
Matt.17: 10-13

“Speaking of John the Baptist” --- It’s actually the great prophet Elijah that today’s two scripture readings are about. But of course he is a figure for John the Baptist, and both of them heralds of the coming Christ. They are, with the prophet Isaiah, the great personalities of the Advent liturgy, with burning words preparing the way of the Lord. There is both strength and tenderness in their message, comfort as well as warning. John’s baptism was a sign of repentance, of a change of heart. It was reconciliation, restoring the tribes of Jacob, turning parents’ hearts towards their children ---- the very mission of Elijah “at the appointed time”. All this a sign of the Messiah’s mission, to be God-with-us, reconciling the world to Himself. Today’s choice of gospel, in this season, reminds us how that was done, through Christ’s suffering and death. The joy of Advent and Christmastime cannot be separated from the reality of how Christ brought about that joy for us by sharing our human situation.

The mission of John the Baptist (and of Elijah) to ‘prepare the way of the Lord’ is also applicable to each Christian. Witnessing to Christ is not something optional but something each of us must do ---- in our actions and lives and attitudes show to other people Him who is our Peace, point out to them the Lamb of God whose sacrifice takes away the sin of the world. Let’s pray to be inspired by the fire that spurred Elijah and John’s preaching, to turn peoples’ hearts towards each other as we receive this year the Good News of a Saviour born for us.