

Good morning everyone.

To-day, being the 2<sup>nd</sup>. Sunday of Advent we are thinking about John the Baptist.

Advent – A time when Christians think of the coming of Christ.

When we think of the light that shone in our darkness.

Do you know the old story of the Father who left his fortune to whoever of his 3 Sons was most successful in filling a room with anything that cost no more than a shilling. ( It must have been a long time ago)

One Son tried bricks but he only managed to fill a small part of the room.

The Second Son bought Straw, the cheapest thing he could think of and still only managed to fill half of the room.

The Third Son bought a Candle, lit it and filled the whole room with light.

And so we think of that LIGHT that will come to shine in our darkness.

I think of John the Baptist as a SIGNPOST . I have here a little one made by Margaret Gribble's Late Husband..

When my Family moved from Hertfordshire to Exeter in 1942 (war time) there were no signposts and it was quite difficult to find the right way. People were reluctant to impart such information.

We might have been spies!!

Years ago, if a King was to visit a certain area, the road to that place had to be straightened out, and all obstacles removed so that his path was clear, - similar perhaps to Isaiah's warning.

John the Baptist's message was that of repentance and that God was doing a new thing, and so people should prepare and be ready to roll out the red carpet to greet him.

If we suddenly got a message that a V.I.P. was about to call on us, we would probably have a quick flip of the duster, perhaps clear some dishes and tidy up a bit. Quick. He or She is coming. He /She is on the way.

So the message would be it's time for a change. A new age is about to begin.

We must be ready ---- THIS IS THE NEW WAY..

Perhaps to highlight this fact, John's clothes were different and yet they resembled those of Elijah. His garment of Camels hair and leather belt around his waist.. And his frugal diet of wild honey and locusts ( or grasshoppers if you like) , So John appeared as a strange wild man.

In to-days reading from St. Mark. John heralds the Way. And God also needs signposts now.

(Perhaps like You and I) To point people along the way) If we signpost someone, we have no idea what effect it will have on them. There is no more important task than pointing other people to our Saviour.

I shall end with a short story about a man called Mr. Gee who attended the Church where old Thomas worshipped.

Thomas had outlived all his associates. Well, he died – and Mr. Gee was afraid no others would attend the funeral so he did. No one else was there, until an army officer ( Brigadier no less) arrived. He said to Mr.Gee You may wonder why I'm here. Thomas was my Sunday School Teacher. I was a wild lad and a great trial to him. He never knew what he did for me. But I owe everything I am or will be to old Thomas.

No preacher or teacher ever knows what they are doing. Like John the Baptist, it is our task to signpost people, and leave the rest to God, although we ourselves may never see our efforts come to fruition.

So may we all be signposts, pointing others to that Great light, . , Jesus whose birth we shall soon be celebrating and so may we direct others to Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. AMEN