

## REFLECTION

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**ADVENT 2019**  
Week Three

*"Behold, I am sending my messenger ahead of you; he will prepare your way before you." - Matthew 11:2-11*

In today's Gospel, we read of John the Baptist in prison. In fact, he is imprisoned by King Herod for speaking out against his kingdom and for calling out Herod's adultery with his sister-in-law. Like others who have been imprisoned for truth-telling, it would be easy for him to lose hope. John the Baptist then sends his own disciples to Jesus, the one in whom he placed his hope, double-checking to see whether his hope was possibly misguided. Jesus relays to John's disciples the message of all the wonderful things going on outside of John's visual periphery, since the prison walls kept John from seeing the Living Word that he had preached consistently when he was free, and by the Jordan river.

## SERVICE SUGGESTION

Carve out time in your schedule to grab coffee or dine with a friend this week. If your tendency is to talk more than listen, hold back and be attentive to what the Spirit might be saying to you through your conversation. If your tendency is to listen, continue listening but also be willing to say what's on your mind—you might be surprised that things you say can really uplift those in your life.

## PRAYER

Holy God, when you breathed Adam from the dust of the earth, you said that, "It was not good for him to be alone," and you then created Eve. When Jesus walked on this earth, he had twelve disciples, and three that were particularly close to him. Even us, O God, we are not meant to be alone.

Remind us to hear the good news that's all around us—from our family, friends, and even strangers. Open our eyes and ears to the things we might be missing because of the busyness and humdrum of life's pressing rituals and incline our hearts to what you are doing in our midst. We ask for these things in our holy name. Amen.

## Focus: COMMUNITY

During the Advent season, like the prophets and peoples before the birth of Christ, we wait and hope. Apathy and disillusionment are constant companions when people are working towards social justice, but the good news is we are not alone. We have intentional communities and companions who walk alongside us—sharing in the good news. We may find inspiration in unexpected places or find ourselves suddenly open to new insights and different ways of looking at the world. We may hear of immigrants who find homes, or of refugees who find solace. We may hear that lower-income individuals receive good word, such as that their health insurance covered a much-needed surgery.

We may even witness little resurrections, like when a damaged relationship, a forgone opportunity, a situation gone awry, or a heart-break are all flipped up-side down. Our friends, family, or even those off the beaten path, may have good messages and stories to tell. The question isn't the existence of good news; the question is whether we are actually listening to the good news happening in our own midst.

