

Here I am, Lord USE ME!



Sunday Reflection with Fr. Rafal

Dear Sisters and Brothers of St. Joseph Parish,

Today there is a funny feeling in the church everywhere. The crib is back in storage, the Wise Men have returned to the East, the shepherds to their flocks and the angels have stopped singing. Instead of a Gospel about a Newborn Baby named Jesus, we hear about an ascetic person called John.

We are now in what the church ironically calls ordinary time, back to the old routine, but it is not. Christmas was not an end, only a beginning. Christmas was a high point, but not the highest. Christmas changed our world, but only if you let it be changed.

The Gospel of today talks about John. He is not the most attractive character in the Gospels- clad in camel hair, eating locusts, shouting "repent!" Jesus says, "I tell you solemnly, of all the children born of women, greater than John the Baptist has never been seen." John was great in God's eyes because he had an uncommon commission. His whole life had a single focus. John pointed to Jesus. Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. He never pointed to Himself.

"I am not the Christ", he told the priest and Levites. "Among you stands one whom you do not know. The strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie. He must increase, but I must decrease." Now turn from John to you because our Christian calling demands very simply we point to Christ.

Whatever we do in life because of our baptism, we have to point to Christ and you point to Christ in the measure that you are Christ-like. This is what Bethlehem was all about. God became like us so that we could become like Him...that we may become Christ like.

Like John, you point to Christ - not with a wave of the hand, but by love and peace. Not by wearing bell, book and candle. You point to Christ by what you do and who you are, the way you treat others.

Have a Blessed 2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time 2026!

Fr. Rafal Ligenza,

Pastor, St. Joseph Catholic Church