

# ***LOOKING TO SUNDAY®***

**Sunday, December 17, 2017**

***The Third Sunday of Advent***

## **ATTENTION GETTERS!**

In the course of a week, most of us see hundreds, if not thousands of people, as we commute to work, spend the day at our places of employment, walk through the mall, pick up our groceries, eat at restaurants, take care of personal errands, and do all the other things associated with daily life.

Unless they are relatives or friends, we usually take no notice of the people who cross our path. They are just part of the scenery that surrounds us we move through our day.

Those we do notice attract our attention for a variety of reasons. Perhaps it is their physical appearance or the clothes they are wearing. Perhaps it is their behavior or the words they are shouting into their cell phone or a strange object they are carrying down the street.

When someone grabs our attention, questions start coming to mind. Who is that person? Why is that individual acting that way? Where is that person from? Is this someone to avoid or someone worth meeting?

If we are the curious type, we might even try to get those questions answered.

In this Sunday's Gospel (John 1:6-8, 19-28), we meet someone who certainly caught the attention of people.

John the Baptist comes out of the desert and like one of the prophets of old he begins proclaiming a powerful message. Now is the time to get ready. Now is the time to prepare the way for the long-awaited Messiah.

The people respond to his preaching with excitement and anticipation. They start coming forward to be baptized. They want to be ready.

The response that John received got the attention of the religious authorities in Jerusalem and that got them asking questions. "Who are you?" "What do you have to say for yourself?" "Why then do you baptize?"

There was no doubt that John the Baptist attracted attention. In fact, John continues to attract attention as we listen to the Gospels of this Advent Season.

But John did not let the attention remain on him, instead he focused it on one who was far more important. As he said, "There is one among you whom you do not recognize, the one who is coming after me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to untie."

What John did is something we are to do. As Christians we are to attract the attention of people and then we are to focus that attention on Jesus Christ. We might say we are to get people to notice us so that they might notice the one we follow.

In Sunday's Second Reading (1 Thessalonians 5:16-24), Paul tells us how we as Christians can attract the attention of people, especially in a society that is darkened by pessimism, cynicism, suspicion, and hostility.

Paul tells us, “Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks.... Do not quench the Spirit.... Refrain from every kind of evil.”

If we live with such joy and thankfulness, if we avoid evil – and we can if stay in touch with God – then we will attract attention. People will start asking questions. They will want to discover the cause of our joy and peace.

John the Baptist attracted attention, he got people asking questions. As Christians we are to do the same; we are to attract attention and not just be part of the scenery!

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