



Wednesday Prayer

3rd Sunday in Advent – Who Are You?

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him.

He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, “I am not the Messiah.” And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the prophet?” He answered, “No.” Then they said to him, “Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?”

John 1:6-8,19-22

Who are you? The priests and Levites question John about his identity and John answers numerous times stating who he is not. It is not about him – he is not the Messiah, he is not Elijah, he is not the prophet – he is here to testify to the light of Christ and to the light of *all* people. How might we recognize the light amongst *all* those around us? And how might we share this light with children and youth, to see themselves as beloved children of God?

Too often, we judge those we don't know, we fear those who are different from us, we question in ways that are not always welcoming or affirming.

To the person on the street corner holding a sign for money, “Who are you?” You are a beloved child of God. May we see the light of this neighbor at a time when their life is filled with hardship.

To the young person struggling with addiction or mental illness, “Who are you?” You are a beloved child of God. May we see the light of Christ shining in them as we offer support and love through these struggles.

To the teen trying to find who they are and to find connection in a world of so much online interaction. “Who are you?” You are a beloved child of God. May we affirm them and support them as they find their way. May we help them find strong connections outside of the online wilderness so they can build a safety net as they navigate through challenging years.

He said, “I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’” as the prophet Isaiah said. John 1:23

Jesus, light of the world, in all our interactions with those we do not know, those of whom we are afraid, young people we may not understand – may we share your everlasting light and peace with those who feel they are crying out to be noticed and affirmed as beloved. Open our hearts. Amen.

Written by Joy McElroy, Cherish All Children Executive Director.