

Today, our attention turns to  
John the Baptist.  
As a man who spoke the truth,  
he attracted people.  
He attracted thousands of people.  
They came to listen to him from  
Jerusalem and all the parts of Judea!

This is what attracted people – he  
spoke with such conviction and a sense  
of urgency about the Coming of the  
Messiah.

Many were filled with wonder because  
the Coming of the Messiah had been  
prophesied for centuries.

The Jews were waiting in longing  
expectation for his Coming.  
*"What would Messiah be like?"*  
*"What would He do?"*

When Jesus finally came,  
He reminded the crowds why they  
were ever attracted to John in the first  
place. He said:

*What did you go out to the desert to  
see?*

- *Was it a reed shaken by the wind?*

In other words, was he a man easily  
swayed by public opinion?

Was he worried too much about  
responses to his messages on Twitter  
poll?

- *Was it to see a man clothed in  
luxurious clothes?*

In other words, was he worried about  
his public image, or was he  
preoccupied by desires for prestige?

- *Was it to see a prophet?*

**"Indeed it was, I tell you,"** Jesus  
says, **"and something beyond a  
prophet.**

**This is he of whom it stands  
written:**

**"Look you, I am sending before  
you my messenger, who will  
prepare your way before you."**

In other words, Jesus was saying:  
Look. You were attracted to John  
because he had God's wisdom in his  
mind,

God's truth on his lips,  
and God's courage in his heart.

Yet, that's not all.

You were attracted to him because he  
spoke about the Messiah to come."

John led the people to Christ by  
captivating them in their longing for

the coming of the Messiah.  
And whenever you or I lead others to  
Christ,  
we, too, become attractive,  
just as John the Baptist had attracted  
many to himself.

But then there were others who  
treated John in another kind of way.  
Since John was not afraid of rebuking  
and speaking out against evil,  
he also became hated.

Of those who hated him was  
Herod Antipas, the King of Galilee.

*Why did King Herod hate him?*

King Herod had paid a visit to his  
brother in Rome.  
During that visit, he lured and  
seduced his brother's wife.  
He came home again,  
dismissed his own wife,  
and married the wife of his brother.

John the Baptist rebuked Herod for  
this. Publicly. Sternly.  
If there was ever a time that was  
unsafe to tell the truth, this was it,

for Herod wanted revenge.  
John was thrown into the dungeon.  
And Herod's new wife didn't exactly  
like John, either.  
As if this cruel sentence was not  
enough torment to silence her  
conscience,  
she wanted his head to be chopped  
off!

Now while John was in prison,  
he heard of the works of Jesus, this  
Messiah whom many were talking  
about.

And John the Baptist sent his disciples  
to Jesus with this question,  
**"Are you the one who is to come,  
or should we look for another?"**

Some think that John the Baptist asked  
this question because he didn't know  
who Jesus was.

But I don't think that's true.  
John the Baptist asked this question  
not for his own sake,  
but for the sake of his disciples.

Perhaps when John and his disciples  
were talking in prison,  
the disciples may have questioned him,

saying:

"Do you really think Jesus is the Messiah who is to come?"

To answer their question, perhaps John said:

"If you have any doubts, go and see what Jesus is doing and your doubts will be at an end."

If that's the case, it was a good answer. If anyone begins to argue with you about Jesus, and to question you about your faith in Him, the best of all answers is not to counter argument with argument, but to say:

**"Give your life to Him; and see what He can do with it."**

The supreme argument for Christ is not intellectual debate, but experience of His power – the power He gives us to change our lives.

So, the disciples of John the Baptist approached Jesus and asked Him:

**"Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another?"**

Jesus knew who He was. He certainly didn't have any personal identity crisis as some try to make you to believe. He said:

**"Go and tell John what you hear and see:**

**the blind regain their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the good news proclaimed to them."**

The things that Jesus did in Galilee He still does today:

- those who were blind to the truth about themselves – about their fellows and about God – have their eyes opened;
- those whose feet were never strong enough to remain on the right path are strengthened;
- those who were tainted with the

disease of sin are cleansed;

- those who were deaf to the voice of conscience begin to listen;
- those who were dead and powerless in sin are raised to newness and holiness of life;
- the poorest person inherits the riches of the love of God.

*So, if you and I can lead others to Christ in order to benefit from all these kind of things, don't you think it is worth it?*

*Even if some people ridicule you for being a follower of Christ, make fun of you and belittle you?*

I know a lady who works in the city. She comes to Mass at St Mary's Cathedral every weekday during her lunch hour.

One of her work colleagues became aware of this and began to tease her and make fun of her for going to Mass. But, she didn't let this person get to

her.

In fact, she would even try to 'sow a few seeds' whenever this person ridiculed her for her faith, for after all, talking about her faith came easy given that she wasn't the one who brought up the subject!

Anyway, this same person who was teasing her came up to her as she was on her way out the door to go to Mass. And she was amazed to hear this work colleague say to her: "Can I come with you to Mass today?"

Not all our efforts to bring others closer to Christ have such happy results, but remember, if people say that you're *crazy* for following Christ and that you've lost your head, remember that even this would be a compliment.

Because that's exactly what John the Baptist did...

**He lost his head!** Literally. And that's why he's a *saint!*