

## 2<sup>nd</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

### St. John 1:35-42

This Gospel is from the “Book of Signs” of the Gospel of St. John and it tells of the first days of our Lord’s ministry. This passage is itself what St. John calls the “third day.” Here, St. John the Baptist, the great man who prepared the way for the coming of Christ, the one spoken of for thousands of years as the new Elijah who would announce the saviour of the world, finds his completion. From his belief that there is to come the one to take away the sins of the world, he says to his disciples as Our Lord passes by, “Look, there is the Lamb of God” (*Jn.* 1:36) With these few words his work is done and he now fades to the background, as he knows himself: “I must decrease, he must increase” (*Jn.* 3:30).

Since the time he leapt in the womb of his mother St. Elizabeth at the visit of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, St. John the Baptist has been the sign of things to come. Now, with the birth of God made Man, the incarnation of the Word of God, and the beginning of the public life of Our Lord, his work is done. From now on he will point all people to Jesus, the universal king, whilst his life will be ended by the crimes of an earthly king.

In some way, the role of St. John the Baptist is like that of a mother and father. The child looks without doubt to his parents to guide him in faith, to give him the answers—as a teacher would—but they are simply preparing him for the life of faith that he must make his own. At the baptism of the child, the mother and father, godmother and godfather, vow before almighty God to raise the child in the life of Christ until that day the child understands that his baptism is his own and that he must take on the life that it demands. From that day on he looks to Jesus Christ as he makes his way back to his heavenly Father.

This role of St. John the Baptist is echoed in St. Andrew, the brother of St. Peter, who, as a disciple of St. John the Baptist, leads his brother to the Lord.

St. Andrew is a mediator, a type of priest, who draws his brother to Christ. This again is a symbol of a mother and father, who themselves are like priests, standing, for a time, between their child and Christ, drawing one to the other.

This great role of the mediator or intercessor or middleman, does not demand an absolute understanding of God and of the faith. The Apostles themselves failed in the beginning to understand who Jesus truly was, which is why they call Him “rabbi” or “teacher.” Jesus is not simply a teacher, He is God. God who desired so much to draw us back to His heart that he no longer called us to Him but instead gave Himself to us and immersed Himself so completely and utterly in the world that not even He escaped pain and suffering and death. This is the true teaching that He gave to us; the power of God’s grace to transform pain into health, suffering into joy, and death into eternal life. This is the great example that mothers and fathers can give to their child. That in spite of destruction and doom and death nothing can overcome the grace of God. And though we have all heard this many times—so many times that it can become dull—it is no longer a matter of simply hearing it but of telling it. And for mothers and fathers it is about telling it to their children and living it for their children, just as Our Lord told it and lived it for us.

This is what the twelve Apostles would do. In spite of their misunderstandings, in spite of their doubts, in spite of their failures—and in the case of Judas Iscariot, his betrayal—they all told it and lived it—and so must we. We must decrease so that He may increase.