

FROM THE PASTOR

My brothers and sisters,

In today's Gospel, we hear of St. John the Baptist as the *voice ... crying out in the desert, Prepare the way of the Lord*. St. John reminds us that we have to prepare for the Lord's coming into our hearts.

So how do we prepare for the Lord's coming? We have to remove the obstacles. The thing is, God very often speaks in whispers to our hearts, and we are surrounded by noise – such noise that it drowns out the whisper of God. In C. S. Lewis' famous book *The Screwtape Letters*, Screwtape – a mentor devil – is writing to his nephew Wormwood – an apprentice devil – about how to cut his “patient” off from God. Instead of inventing all new manner of temptations, Screwtape says the best way to keep him from God is to create so much noise that humanity can no longer hear the voice of God.

Have we entered the classroom of silence – both exterior and interior silence? Is there ever a time in our lives when the TV and computers are off, the phones are put away, the ear buds are taken out of our ears, and we just sit with God, talking and listening to Him?

The crowds in today's Gospel go out of the cities into the wilderness to hear John the Baptist. Do we ever leave the chaos behind – even if only for a few minutes – to sit in silence with our God? Until we do so on a regular basis, we will not be able to prepare for the coming of the Lord in our hearts and souls.

This Advent, let's make a resolution to spend time in silence each day – a minute, five minutes, maybe more – so that the obstacles which block the coming of God can be removed, and we listen to His whisper in our hearts.