

(Start with the poem The Road Less Traveled by Robert Frost)

This week end as we celebrate the birth of John the Baptist we encounter a story that is unique. Without a doubt he ended up going down the road less traveled. His parents Elizabeth and Zachariah were older when God announced to them that they would have a son and his name would be John. Stunned by this news the older couple put their trust in God's plan and surrendered to his way. They prepared themselves for the gift that would be coming their way.

After his birth John became the one who would announce the coming of the Messiah. He was keenly aware that his life would be used to point to another. His story would not be the focal point it would be a guide for others. He encountered Jesus on the banks of the Jordan River; he baptized Jesus and then witnessed the opening of the skies as the Spirit in the shape of a dove would descend on the Lord in power. After that crucial event, John would be arrested and beheaded by a paranoid king.

So What might John's story be telling all of us? John spent his life focusing on the one who was to come after him. St. Paul in his preaching to the people of Antioch of Pisidia shared a similar thought: as John was finishing his work, he said, "What do you suppose that I am? I am not he. Behold One is to come after me; I am not worthy to

unfasten the sandals on his feet.”

John was a herald and so his words remind us that we, through our baptisms, are to be heralds to Christ’s life: his suffering, his death, and his resurrection. Jesus is a part of who we are, and he brings clarity to the way that we witness to him.

When we choose to offer forgiveness to someone who has hurt us; when brokenness in our life threatens our future and we choose to believe that Jesus is at work in us and will never abandon us even in our darkest hour; we will show the world Christ in his resurrected glory.

Whether in our families or our faith communities we need to remember what matters. What matters is hearing the word of God and doing his will. With the help of a framework that is constructed of prayer, the scriptures, and our church’s teaching we like John the Baptist can walk the road less traveled and discover within ourselves that it indeed has made all the difference.