



*From the Office of the President*

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**Zephaniah 3:14-18a**

**Response, Isaiah 12:2-3, 4, 5-6**

**Philippians 4:4-7**

**Luke 3:10-18**

Will all the graduates of December 2018, please stand and be acknowledged?  
(Applause!)

John the Baptist. Mary of Nazareth. Jesus. Ignatius of Loyola. Your Regis University professors. Any patient teacher worthy of the name will tell you from their own experience, we become like those we love. We learn virtues, especially wisdom and patience and holy restlessness from the master teachers we've had.

John the Baptist, that great challenger of the status quo, had the luxury of knowing his testimony was heard by the people. He is asked by everyday people - merchants, soldiers, tax collectors, parents - all vaguely ill-at-ease, expectant, longing. "What shall we do?" they ask. "How ought we to live?" they plead.

His answer is clear but it has two parts. First, unburden yourself. If you find yourself tangled in distractions and anxious about trivia, if you have more than you need then share what you have more earnestly. If you are powerful, use your power for the good of all. Include those left out. Love those who feel no love.

John made a path through the mountains of anxiety, Roman imperial intimidation, and he cleared the way through valleys of despair. Yet he was not the Messiah, the Savior. This is the second part of John's answer. He points to the one who is coming.

The crowds John encountered had themselves little reason for joy. They were a conquered people, tolerated by the Roman imperium. Aware of their own need for deliverance, they felt a glimmer of anticipation that he might be the one, the Messiah. He counseled justice and rectitude but the promise he spoke was of something far more than they suspected or even knew they wanted. "I baptize you with water ... He will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire."



Advent, like all our good teachers, challenges our anxiety, our burdens; it frees us by burning away fear and exile. Love is like that, especially Divine love. The good news is that our joy comes from being freed. We all have our dross our waste. We all eagerly await the next right step. If we pay attention, if we take ourselves to this table consciously then the burdens and worries become like chaff.

Advent, like education, never lets go of us. The hold of Advent, the joy of Advent, remains because we believe that heaven once came down to earth and changed everything, forever.