

19 December 2024

[Jdg 13:2...35; Lk 1:5-25](#)

Homily

In the first two chapters of his Gospel, Luke tells parallel stories about John the Baptist and Jesus. John the Baptist's circumcision, with the song of Zechariah, parallels that of Jesus, with the song of Simeon; John grows up and withdraws into the desert, just as Jesus grows up and also withdraws into the desert for forty days; and so on.

Today's Gospel, recounting the announcement to Zechariah of the birth of John, is parallel to the announcement to Mary of the birth of Jesus, which will be tomorrow's Gospel.

Zechariah was a venerable old man whose family tree contained the cream of Israel's bourgeoisie. His calling card was impressive: a priest of Levitical origin, a strict observer of the Law, who performed the priestly service in the temple, and who had entered that day to offer the sacrifice of incense. Mary, on the other hand, is a very young girl, from a humble family and a humble village, whose ancestral lineage is unknown, although it is said that her fiancé was of the lineage of David.

What Luke wants to show is that the religious establishment, with all its prestige, virtue and grandeur, does not receive God's message - at least not without asking for proof - and is silenced. The little people, the *Anawim*, the 'poor of Yahweh', represented by Mary -- this little people, not very observant of the Law -- which they knew only vaguely -- and despised by the great ones, received this message with a fresh and ingenuous faith; and Mary's mouth fell open in a song of praise: *My soul magnifies the Lord*.

Let us be of the New Testament and not of the Old. Like Mary, let us open ourselves in faith to every Word that comes from God, and let that Word take root in us and bear fruit.

Armand Veilleux