

Some of us are old enough to remember the Art Linkletter's TV program called "Kids say the darndest things." Linkletter asked a boy, "Who is the boss in your family; you're Mom or your Dad?" The boy paused and said, "Both of them." Linkletter replied, "You are a real diplomat." The boy responded, "No, I am a Catholic/Baptist."

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God.

As it is written in Isaiah the prophet: *Behold, I am sending my messenger ahead of you; he will prepare your way.*

*A voice of one crying out in the desert: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths."* John the Baptist appeared in the desert proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. People of the whole Judean countryside and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the Jordan River as they acknowledged their sins. John was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist. He fed on locusts and wild honey. And this is what he proclaimed: "One mightier than I am coming after me. I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

Seminary Professor Dr. Kirk Jones, wrote a book entitled, "Addicted to Hurry". The Professor believes that speed is an accepted value in American life; that the busier we are, the more we accomplish, the more valuable we become. He writes, people are so anxious and, in a hurry, to get things done, that they have little room for their relationships with God, their neighbor or themselves. When we find ourselves running when there is no reason to run, when we rush while doing ordinary things, it may be said that we have become addicted to hurry.

The hurried pace of our lives, puts a negative spin on patience, kindness, joy, compassion, and dialogue. Why are we going so fast and doing so much; why are we in such a hurry?

Jones suggests we are running away from God, from ourselves, our fears. Jones believes that if we practice slowing down, we will see life more clearly, we will listen more carefully, and we will think more deeply. If we slow down, live life more deliberately, we will be happier, healthier and holier.

Listen to how children answer the questions a teacher asked during an AT&T commercial. The teacher asked, "What's better doing two things at once rather than just one thing? Children all yell doing two things is better? Teacher asked, "How come?" One boy replied, because its twice as much fun."

The teacher then asked "What's better faster or slower?" At once the children yelled, "Faster, Faster." The teacher asked what's fast. A little girl said, "My mom car and a Cheetah." At which the teacher asked, "What's slow." A little boy said, "My grandma slow." The teacher said, "Would you like it better if she was fast?" the boy replied, "I bet she would like it better if she was fast. Maybe tape a cheetah to her back." Kids say the darndest things.

The final question, “What’s better more or less?” The children shouted, “More, more, more.” The teacher asked why is more better.” A little girl replied because if you like something you could say, “we want more, we want more, we want more.”

When I listen to the children’s answered, I can see why Professor Jones would write that speed is an accepted value in our society.

On the other hand John the Baptist lived life reminding us that more is not always better than less and faster is not always better than slower and that speed doesn’t need to be an accepted value. John prepared for Christ by letting go, by living simply, and by not cluttering up his life: his diet was locust and wild honey; his clothing was camel hair and a leather belt, his life style was one of solitude and prayer.

As the holiday season speeds us up, we are invited to slow down: as the holiday season speeds us up, we prepare for Christ not by doing more but by being more.

Remember the story of Jesus visiting his two friends Mary and Martha. Martha was busy doing things to prepare for the Lord and Mary was just being present to Jesus. Jesus said, “Martha, Martha you are worried and anxious about many things, only one thing is required and Mary has chosen the better portion.” Mary chose to sit, to listen and be present to Christ.

Like Mary and John the Baptist, we prepare for Christ by letting go and letting God more deeply into your life, realizing doing more and doing it faster is not always better.

I conclude with this Advent reflection by author S.C Lourie:

*Go into this week with the attitude that your peace, your health of mind, and your heart mean more than getting everything else done. That your smile matters, That feeling rested matters. That holding the hand of your loved one's matter. So, pause lots, walk at a deliberate pace that doesn't pull you apart. Honor the things that make you feel joy inside, the things that make you feel alive. Give time to those things this week. Make time for what really matters.*

Let us pray: please pray after me: Lord Jesus, John the Baptist reminded us that faster is not always better than slower and more is not always better than less, open my heart that I may empty myself into your loving arms. Amen and Amen.

May God bless you and keep you, may God's face shine upon you and be gracious to you always. May Mary our mother hold you in her loving arms. Have a blessed week.