

Birth of St. John the Baptist

Because St. Clement, McLeansboro, was a “mission” parish of St. John, Dahlgren, the priest served both parishes. Because Grandpa was parish trustee, practically every Sunday the priest would drop by to count the collection with Grandpa & then eat with the family after Mass at St. Clement. He was always invited to eat at Grandma’s table with the family.

One Sunday he invited the family for a “Duck Dinner” at the rectory in Dahlgren. We all got dressed up and headed to the rectory in Dahlgren. Other people were there, and Father Foley asked “why are you here?” When we told him he had invited us, all became uncomfortable. He forgot he invited us. But Grandma and Mom helped in the kitchen, a table was added. And we laughed with Fr. Foley for years about the “Duck Dinner.”

“Why are you here?” is the question that faced the suffering servant in Isaiah, Paul, John the Baptist and Jesus throughout their ministry on this earth. All accept their ministry to “prepare the way of God” through and with their lives.

The suffering servant in Isaiah gives us a clue about why we are here: “The Lord called me from my mother’s womb...he made me a light to the nations...” Centuries after Isaiah, **the early Christian community notices that Jesus is God’s suffering servant, and as followers of Christ, they are to be the same: suffering servants of the Lord.**

John the Baptist had no idea why he was called during his life. As the early church reflected on the Baptist’s call, they saw in John’s life that he was called literally in the womb to prepare the way of the Lord. **Again the early Church saw its mission to give their lives to preparing the way of the Lord.**

We are called to reflect on **why we are here** today. Our call, as disciples of Christ, is to say “Yes” to God without knowing where that call will take us in life. That is a vocation that we all share every day of our lives. We can’t be absolutely certain why we’re here. Only God can and will answer that question.

Today, with our country and world torn by fear and division, we ask ourselves, “What can one person do?” The good news is that we are wonderfully made. It isn’t in our looks, our IQ or the material goods we amass. It’s the bit of God’s self that is knit into our bones. God favors us. John’s call was to be close to God’s heart. Jesus WAS God’s heart and shares it with us. God is good...all the time!