



Wednesday Prayer

2nd Sunday of Advent – Prepare the way

...the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, “The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.’” Luke 3:2b-4

Recently, I’ve been reflecting on things people have said to me that made a significant impact and that have stayed with me. I doubt whether the person sharing at the time thought what they were saying was profound, but to me it was. I wanted to go out and share it with others, to proclaim a truth for others to hear.

One of these messages came from a survivor of trafficking while we were on a community walk together. We were discussing how we each work to end this injustice, and how we can learn from each other’s presentations and styles. And then she said it, the statement that has stuck with me:

“Every time we share our story, we leave a piece of ourselves with you.”

I was humbled by her openness to share this with me, and also committed to preparing myself and others to receive her story, and those of countless others, with the care and love so deserved. I wonder if she ever feels she is crying out in the wilderness, leaving this most vulnerable part of herself out there.

In the work we do, we can prepare the way by honoring the stories of those with lived experience of exploitation and trafficking. We can (and must) pay survivors when we ask them to be a speaker at an event, or to be part of a panel, or to share a story for a fundraiser. We can see them as the expert, professional speaker, trainer, leader that they are – **and** see them as a full person aside from the victimization they experienced. Nobody should be defined by the worst thing that happened to them. When that most vulnerable part of someone is shared with us, may we be prepared with honor and respect.

God, your word was given in the wilderness to be proclaimed by one who was not of imperial or religious authority. Help us to see how we can prepare the way in our daily lives to hear the stories of those crying out. John proclaimed the good news for the whole world. Let us share that promise in our words and actions. Amen.

Written by Joy McElroy, Cherish All Children Executive Director.