

## A REFLECTION ON THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

– by Sister Barbara Jean Franklin, ASC

Colored lights reflected in water and on windows, spilling onto freshly-fallen snow, repeating themselves on cherished tree ornaments and foil-wrapped gifts under the tree. Sometimes the reflections themselves draw our attention as much as the lights. Not only the lights but all of our Christmas decorations are intended to reflect the joy of the season. However, it is easy to get caught up in the decorations and forget the reason for the displays.

John the Baptist is not about showy displays but about true conversion. His baptismal ministry serves as a reminder to all of us to appropriately prepare the way of the Lord. In John's Gospel, the Baptist is introduced as one who comes as a witness to introduce the Light—Jesus. John the Baptist is very clear that he is a reflection of the Light. When asked if he is the Messiah, or Elijah, or the Prophet each time he denies it. In response he quotes Isaiah: "I am the voice crying out in the wilderness—make straight the way of the Lord."

Sometimes we have to be voices in the wilderness, too. It is easy to be caught in the busy-ness of Christmas and let Advent pass us by. To be a voice in the wilderness is to be conscious of why we are so busy about preparing for Christmas. Like John the Baptist, we are reflections of the Light. How we approach each activity of our day determines the kind of reflection we are for each other.

So, let's decorate our lives with the true Light. As we hang Christmas decorations, shop for gifts and wrap packages, as well as attend to the routines of daily life, let's be mindful of the reason we do all these things. As Paul reminds the Thessalonians and us: "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing and give thanks to God at each moment."