

# SATURDAY, DECEMBER 19

## DO YOU SEE LAMB RESTING?

*A nativity scene isn't a nativity scene without the animals. Cows and donkeys, maybe a dog or two and several sheep along with their lambs. How many do you see in the image? Did you notice the one tucked in close to the side of the stable, intently guarding the baby? Perhaps it is because one day, Jesus will also be known as the Lamb of God, a name given to him by his cousin, John the Baptist.*

The gospel today recounts the angel Gabriel's birth announcement of the infant John. While elsewhere in Luke's gospel we hear of John's mother's joy, his father, Zechariah, isn't convinced at the validity of God's planning. Zechariah is stunned and pushes back. Because of his lack of faith, Gabriel renders Zechariah mute for the duration of Elizabeth's pregnancy.

In the end, it all happens the way the angel says it will, and in birth, as well as in life, John the Baptist is a forerunner to Jesus. During Advent we know him as the voice crying out in the wilderness to prepare the way, to make the paths straight and level for the one who is to come. If his father had a hard time believing in the fulfillment of God's plan, John the Baptist fully gives himself over to it.



Indeed, as we have seen, clothed in camel's hair, feeding on locusts and honey, he embraces his role as a prophet and is wildly successful at "turning many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God" (Luke 1:16). Andrew's previously highlighted conversion story is just one example of this. Truly, John is born with a vision of the Kingdom that is yet to come fully alive.

How might John the Baptist continue to serve as a prophet for our time?

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