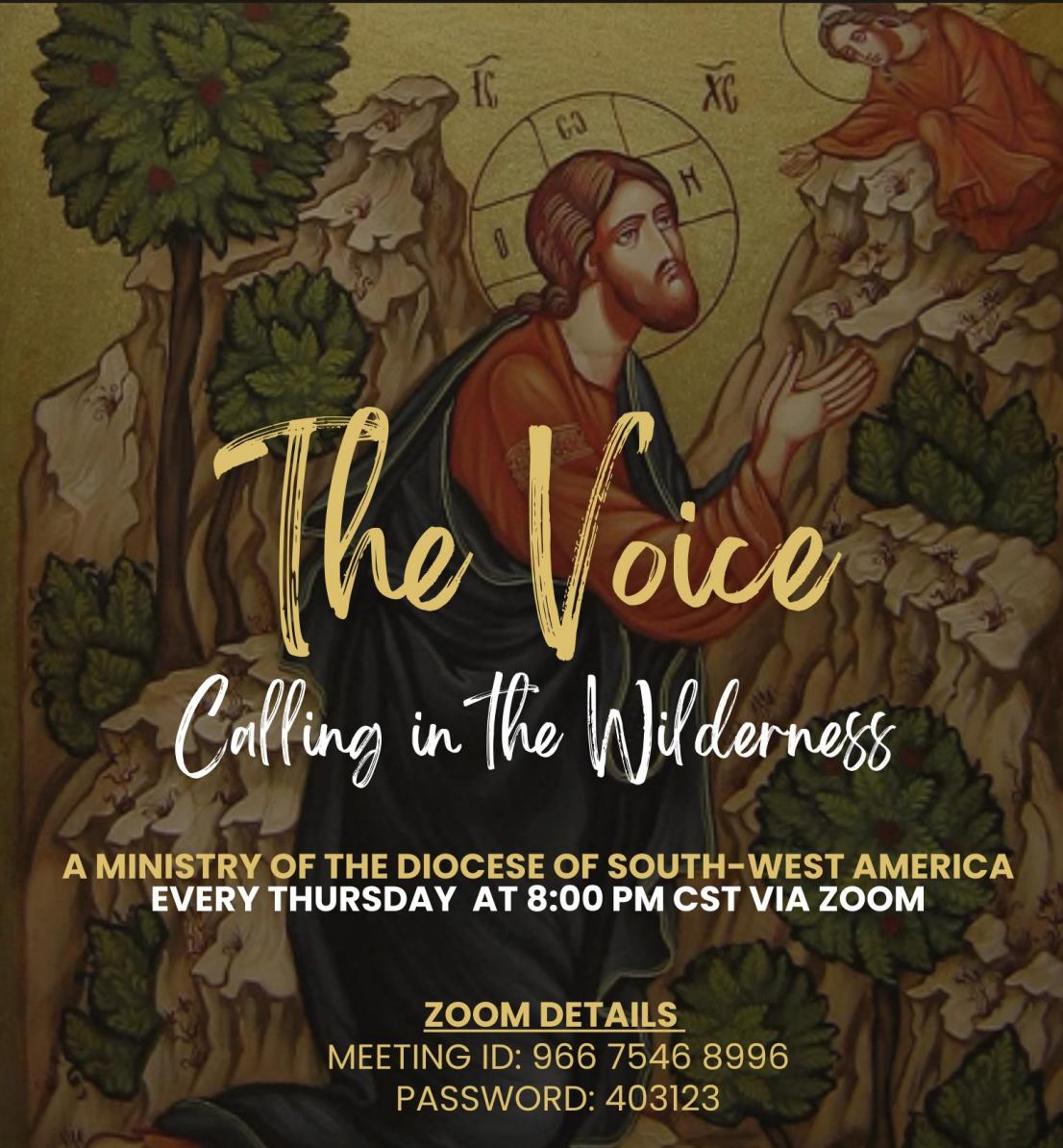


A voice cries: 'In the wilderness prepares the way of the Lord;
make straight in the desert a highway for our God'

ISAIAH 40:3



The Voice Calling in the Wilderness

**A MINISTRY OF THE DIOCESE OF SOUTH-WEST AMERICA
EVERY THURSDAY AT 8:00 PM CST VIA ZOOM**

ZOOM DETAILS

MEETING ID: 966 7546 8996

PASSWORD: 403123

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:
REV. FR. IMMANUEL (AMAL) PUNNOOSE
EMAIL: APUNNOOSE@SVOTS.EDU

The Voice Calling in the Wilderness

Schedule for every Thursday (CST)

8:00 PM – Kauma + Opening Prayer

8:05 PM – Bible Study

8:35 PM – Benediction + Announcements

Discussion Opportunities

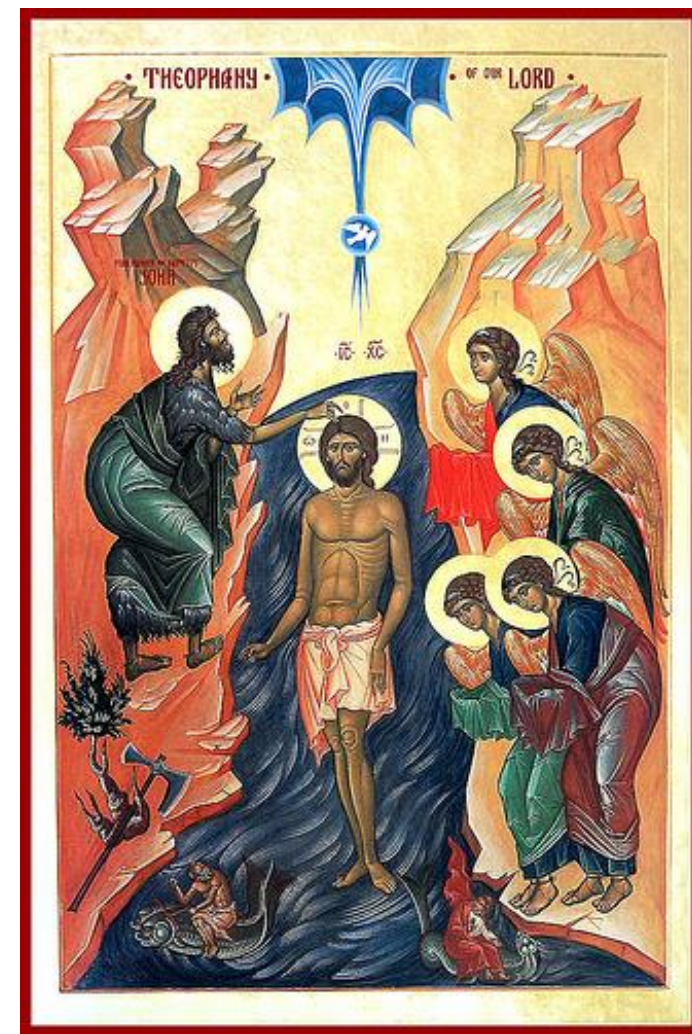
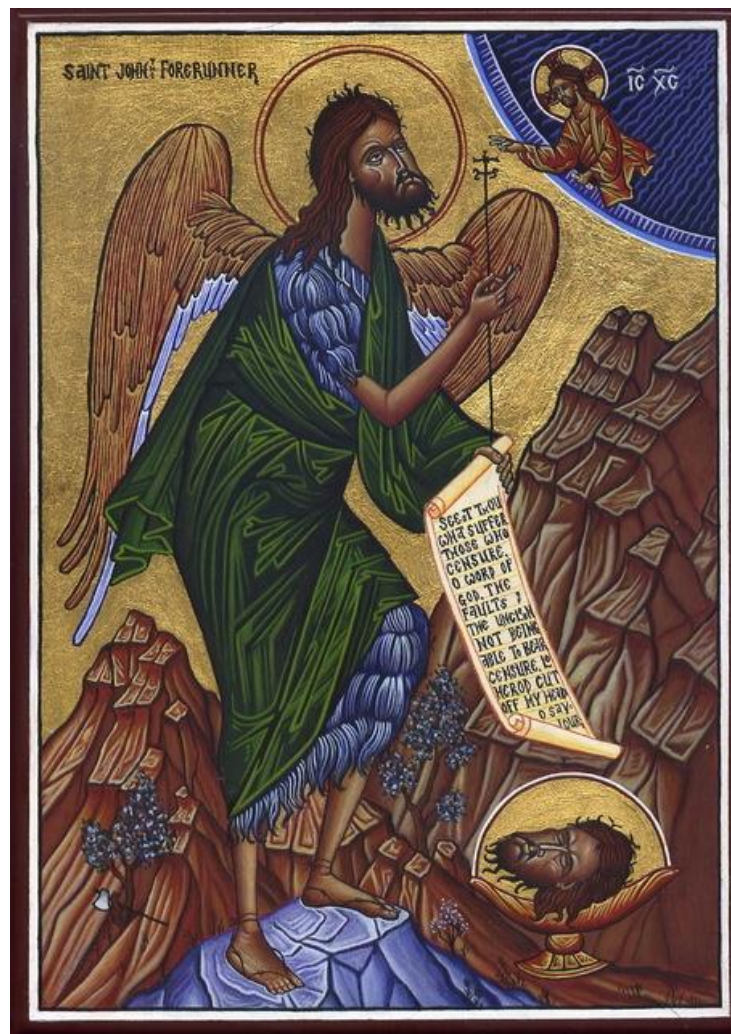
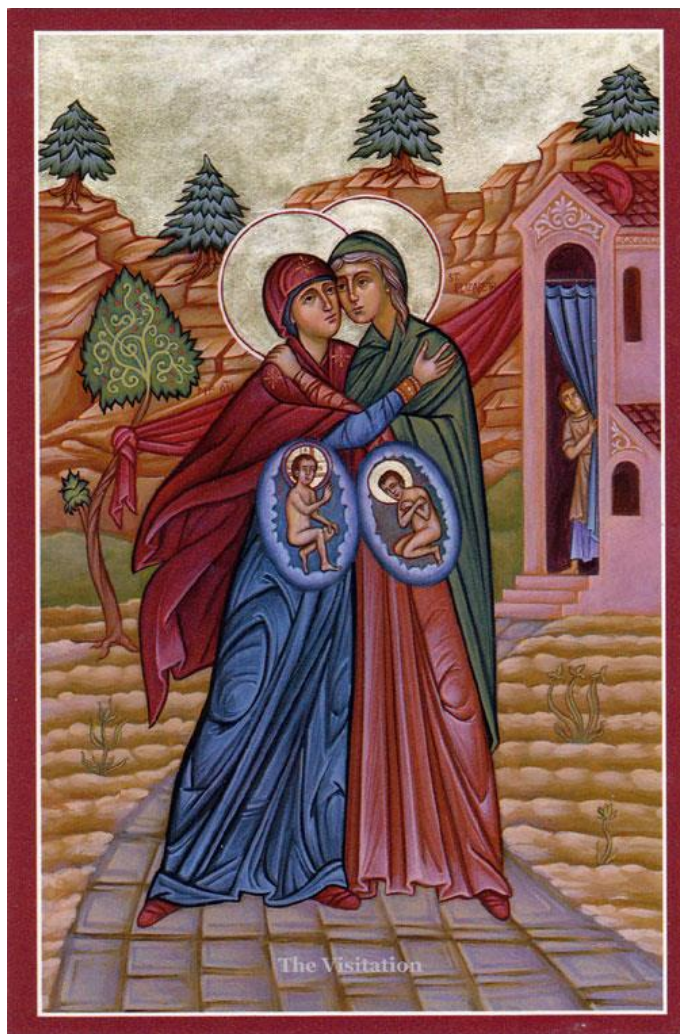
Last Thursday of every month will be dedicated towards discussion of that month's topics.

Questions can also be emailed to the speaker or myself at apunnoose@svots.edu

Zoom Recordings

Available on diocesan website at
<http://ds-wa.org/bible-study-the-voice.html>

St John the Forerunner



Background and Early Life

- His father, Holy Prophet Zachariah, was a priest of the course of Abijah ([1 Chronicles 24:10](#)), and his mother, Righteous Elizabeth, was of the daughters of Aaron ([Luke 1:5](#)).
- Vague and/or conflicting descriptions on the relationship between St Elizabeth and St Mary, the Theotokos (*syngenis* – Greek for “kin”)
- St John was a Nazarite from his birth ([Numbers 6:1-12](#); [Luke 1:15](#)). He spent his early years in the mountainous tract of Judea lying between Jerusalem and the Dead Sea ([Matthew 3:1-12](#)).
- He led a simple life, wearing rope fiber clothing and eating "locusts and wild honey" (Matthew 3:4).

Prophecy of the Birth of St John the Forerunner

Malachi 3:1

“Behold, I send My messenger,
And he will prepare the way before
Me.
And the Lord, whom you seek,
Will suddenly come to His temple,
Even the Messenger of the covenant,
In whom you delight.
Behold, He is coming,”
Says the LORD of hosts.

Isaiah 40:1-3

Comfort, comfort my people, says your
God.

Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to
her
that her warfare is ended, that her
iniquity is pardoned, that she has
received from the LORD’s hand double for
all her sins.

A voice cries:

“In the wilderness prepare the way of
the LORD, Make straight in the desert a
highway for our God.

The Ministry of St John the Forerunner

- I tell you, among those born of women none is greater than John; yet he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.” (St Luke 7:28)
- ¹⁹ And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” ²⁰ He confessed, he did not deny, but confessed, “I am not the Christ.” ²¹ And they asked him, “What then? Are you Eli’jah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the prophet?” And he answered, “No.” ²² They said to him then, “Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?” ²³ He said, “I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’ as the prophet Isaiah said.” (St John 1:19-23)

The Last Prophet & Bridge of the New Covenant

Balaam's Prophecy (Numbers 24)

- I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not nigh:
a star shall come forth out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel; it shall crush the forehead^[c] of Moab, and break down all the sons of Sheth.

John's Revelation (St John 1)

- The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! ³⁰ This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks before me, for he was before me.' ³¹ I myself did not know him; but for this I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel."

St John 3:25-30

²⁵ Now a discussion arose between John's disciples and a Jew over purifying. ²⁶ And they came to John, and said to him, "Rabbi, he who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you bore witness, here he is, baptizing, and all are going to him." ²⁷ John answered, "No one can receive anything except what is given him from heaven. ²⁸ You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him. ²⁹ He who has the bride is the bridegroom; the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice; therefore this joy of mine is now full. ³⁰ He must increase, but I must decrease."





His Wings in Iconography

- Therefore, the presence of the wings is to symbolize John's status as **a divine messenger** (in Greek "Evangelos", from where the word "Angel" is derived).
- He is "*the culmination and the crown of the prophets*". Therefore, St John is an especial example among the Saints of an earthly "angel" and a heavenly man. As such, he is also described as the "**Angel of the Desert**" in the inscriptions of icons.
- He lived a life of **chastity, abstinence, and prayer, not being mindful of material needs**, but with his attention fixed firmly to heaven. This is the life of the angels, and why he is given the wings of a dove.

Next Week: The Holy Trinity

