

**Sunday, December 11
3rd Sunday of Advent**

Theory describes Type A individuals as

rude
ambitious
rigidly organized
highly status-conscious
sensitive
impatient
anxious
proactive and concerned with time management.

**Isaiah 35:1-10,
Canticle 15,
James 5:7-10
Matthew 11:2-11**

The Rev Fanny Belanger

People with type A personalities are often overachievers who push themselves with deadlines
and hate both delays and ambivalence.

I won't ask anybody to raise hands, because although we are all very different
I think most of us can relate to that.

Maybe you were born a type A – like myself.

Or maybe, you did not ask for it, it's just this world we live in
your job

your family

your commitments

that push you to be this person highly functioning and efficient, and as a result impatient and anxious.

You became like that.

Or maybe this is the person *you used to be*, highly functioning and efficient, and now you find yourself
aging

or sick

or unemployed

or just on your own

And you wonder what sense you can give to your life

now you don't overachieve anymore or just don't achieve

anything at all.

In any case, there is good news for all us today because we are in good company
with John the Baptist.

John the Baptist, the one who, is it necessary to remind you,

was an overachiever even before he was born?

Leaping in Elizabeth's womb – could not wait to be in the world
to start his mission,

to open the way,

to call for repentance,

to proclaim the Messiah.

Yes, that's who John the Baptist was, we've heard so much about him during Advent, I think we now
have a clear portrait:

He was rude (*He called people brood of vipers*)

ambitious (*Wasn't he the precursor of the Messiah?*)

rigidly organized (*lining up penitents for a baptism he himself created*)

highly status-conscious (*thought he knew better than King Herod*)

sensitive (*both joyful and mad, all in the same time*)

He was impatient, anxious, proactive and concerned with
time management (*because as you know, the "times" had finally come*).

Well, as you probably know, it's not always bad to be a Type A kind of person.
You get to do the exciting stuff
 You have a passionate life
 You use your gifts
 And actually God can use you.
John the Baptist had a passionate and godly life for sure.

I cannot think of somebody freer than he was.
He focused on his mission
He did not care for food or fashion
 eating locusts and wearing camel hair
He did not care what people thought about him,
 He did not fear anybody
He hated hypocrites
denouncing the king's sexual immorality
 - when Herod was sleeping with his brother's wife -
And you know, John the Baptist was not *tweeting* from a remote place
He denounced Herod's sin to Herod's face.
 But then, for all his zeal, he ended up in jail. Sad story.

It's hard to imagine how bad prison must have been for John the Baptist.
Fierce and independent as he was, he felt probably like
 a lion in a cage.
He the leader, He the God-sent messenger,
 it must have driven him crazy.
And obviously, he did not let go of his mission easily:
Today we learn that he sent his disciples *to check* on the Messiah – isn't it amazing?
John wanted to make sure Jesus was doing the job the way he
intended the job to be.

John was supposed to prepare the way. In his type A kind of mind, the Messiah was supposed to be
super type A:
John the Baptist purified with water, but the Messiah was supposed to send his fire
 have his winnowing fork at hand
 burn the chaff
 judge the world and make all things new.
And so, what was this Messiah doing with all his power,
hanging out with the losers and the poor?

From his prison, John the Baptist tries to check on and to control the Messiah
and ends up
in this very passionate way of his
being rude and hurtful and mean and this is what he says: *Okay, let me know if we need to find*
somebody else for Messiah
because obviously you're not up to it, Jesus.

That's the thing. When you're proactive it's very good for you and for everybody unless you become
a total control freak
if things don't go your way.

So how does Jesus address the situation? He says to John:

*The blind receive their sight,
the lame walk, the deaf hear,
the dead are raised, and the poor have
good news brought to them.*

Don't take offense at me, I am fulfilling the whole Messiah's program given by Isaiah.

Jesus means: you're not in control here,
There is nothing you can do because this is already happening.

Learn to let go.

Easier said than done, correct?

Well, this is what happened on Monday morning,
in my Type A kind of life.

7:00am. Doing lists in my head.

Trying to get the week under control, to squeeze it all in -

All for the sake of doing good, of course.

I was driving to a homeless shelter actually, and what happened is when I got in there already
all stressed out

there was this man standing there and he was literally

Leaping for joy, shouting *I can see again, I can see again.*

He had cataract surgery. Thanks to a few volunteers who gave money to help him out.

Found a doctor for him.

And as the words of Isaiah were on the back of my mind: *The blind receive their sight,
and the poor have*

good news brought to them.

Gosh, it made me cry like I could feel it was really Jesus himself touching his eyes.

I could plan as much as I wanted, it was all happening without me.

Or was it?

More likely *it was all happening without me controlling it*

But I was absolutely a part of it, witnessing it.

I don't know if you have noticed in our text all our characters are messengers:

Jesus is God's messenger, John the Baptist is Jesus's messenger,

the disciples are John's messenger.

There is this sort of popular saying that goes there are angels everywhere, that we are all angels,
messengers in Hebrews. Witnesses.

Well, maybe this saying has a point.

The people who gave the money and the doctor who cured the homeless were witnesses of Jesus's love.

This man with his joy and thankfulness was witness of the wonder of being healed

I was a witness of the miracle happening.

And so whether we are over functioning or at the end of our rope, in the wild or in prison,

I think that's exactly what we are called to be: Not getting it perfect, not doing it all but
being Messengers.

With words, with actions, and sometimes also just by just being there, we are invited to point out to the
kingdom of God when it finally

breaks in. Amen.