

Reflection Thursday 3rd Week Advent 2022

WHO IS AN EVANGELIST?

John the Baptist was an evangelist. Many thought that he was the promised Messiah but his mission was to announce the Good News, preparing the way for Jesus' coming.

I wonder how we might answer the question 'who is an evangelist?' Let's start by looking at the Greek! The English word *evangelist* comes from the Greek noun *euangelistes*, which means '*bringer of good tidings,*' or '*announcer of good news.*'

You will find the word *angel* lurking in the middle of both the English and the Greek words, and (in terms of the etymology of the word) you'd be right to make this connection. An angel is a messenger, or an envoy, and when the message they bring is from God, it is good; (*eu* is the Greek word for 'good').

So, an evangelist is one who, like the angels, brings a message of good news from God. And I think we can understand something of the evangelist's message by looking at the message of the angels in the New Testament.

What is their message? Nothing less than the infinite God of love come down, God-with-us, peace on earth, joy to all, reconciliation, new life...

There is a broad sense, then, in which all Christians are called to be evangelists. We are all called to speak, live and act in ways that bring this good news of God-with-us to those we meet. We are all messengers of glad tidings. (Annie O'Connor Church Army, October 2019)