

*Second Week of Advent Friday 9th December 2022*

*Reading 1, Isaiah 48:17-19; Responsorial Psalm, Psalm 1:1-4, 6;*

*Gospel, Matthew 11:16-19*

'You cannot please all of the people all of the time.' How many times have you heard that, or even said it yourself? I can hear myself saying it in many a meeting even as I type. And it is true, we cannot please all of the people all of the time: to think otherwise is foolhardy. We all are individuals, we each have our own intellect and perspective on people, issues, and just about anything and everything. We each have our own prejudices. Neither can or should we expect everyone else to dance to our tune. People are quite capable of forming their own consciences and making their own minds up.

But this Gospel passage offers a different perspective. The ministries of John the Baptist and Jesus are contrasted, and both are found wanting, in the eyes of 'this generation.' But the ministries of John the Baptist and Jesus are meant to offer a contrast. Both offer a way of conversion and transformation, both offer a way to see beyond the folly and emptiness of this world, by allowing the wisdom that comes alive in each of us when we allow our words, thoughts and deeds to be the words, thoughts and deeds that God desires from us, that Jesus leads us to make our own by inviting him more fully into our daily lives. And to do that well, we have to stop trying to please others, stop trying to please ourselves by overcoming our own prejudices, and simply aim to give over our lives to pleasing God and Jesus by putting them at the centre of all we think, say and do.



**Reflection written by: Deacon Martin Bell, St Joseph's Blaydon, and St Anne's Winlaton**