



St Pope Damasus I (305-384) was a sixty-year-old deacon when he was elected bishop of Rome in 366. His reign was marked by violence from the start when another group decided to elect a different pope. He was the pope who commissioned Saint Jerome to translate the Scriptures into Latin, the Vulgate version of the Bible.

First Reading: (Sir 48:1- 4, 9-11) Then the prophet Elijah arose like a fire, and his word burned like a torch. He brought a famine upon them, and by his zeal he made them few in number. By the word of the Lord he shut up the heavens, and also three times brought down fire. How glorious you were, O Elijah, in your wondrous deeds! And who has the right to boast which you have? You who were taken up by a whirlwind of fire, in a chariot with horses of fire; you who are ready at the appointed time, it is written, to calm the wrath of God before it breaks out in fury, to turn the heart of the father to the son, and to restore the tribes of Jacob. Blessed are those who saw you, and those who

have been adorned in love; for we also shall surely live.

Ps 79:2-3, 15-16, 18-19

R./ God of hosts, bring us back; let your face shine on us and we shall be saved.

Gospel: (Mt 17:10-13) As they were coming down the mountain the disciples asked Jesus, "Then why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?" He replied, "Elijah does come, and he is to restore all things; but I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they did not know him, but did to him whatever they pleased. So also the Son of man will suffer at their hands." Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them of John the Baptist.

REFLECTION

John the Baptist pointed to Jesus the way Elijah pointed to God. We have a vibrant image of Elijah in the first reading. His words are on fire. He brought down fire from the heavens by the power of God. Elijah was taken up to heaven on a chariot. But people did not recognize him or his importance. John the Baptist came to prepare the way of the Messiah with his fiery words. People did not recognize him or heed his voice. And when Jesus came, he was not recognized despite his glory. Jesus says Elijah has come in the person of John the Baptist and was not recognized. So people will not recognize him or realize his importance. **The advent invites us to look at our resistance to repentance and to open ourselves to the subtle ways that Jesus seeks to come into our lives.**