

BRINGING HOME THE GOSPEL

December 4, 2022 • 2nd Sunday of Advent • Matthew 3:1-12

Produce Good Fruit

John the Baptist let his followers know that he was baptizing with water, but the one who was coming after him, Jesus, would baptize with the Holy Spirit. He reminds us that it is not enough to be sorry for our sins or shake our heads helplessly over the wrongs of the world. We must be people of action and do something to change things.

John's baptism promoted a turn away from sin. The baptism Jesus offers not only turns us away from sin, it propels us into loving action. Our baptism into the Body of Christ empowers us to carry Christ's love to the world. If it doesn't do that then we are like the chaff of wheat, the useless husk covering the seed that John the Baptist talks about in this reading.

Our baptism marks us as children of God, a people of love. Not just the hearts-and-flowers-love that musicians sing about or even the platonic love between really good friends. As a matter of fact, we don't even have to like someone in order to love him or her in Christian love.

The love we share as God's children is more like a bond. It is the God-glue that links us to one another, binding us in a relationship closer than brothers and sisters or husband and wife. It makes all people, all creation, one with each other and with God.

This is the love God wants us to share with our children. It may not have the same euphoric feeling we felt for our children when they were born, but it is no less honest or deep. Somehow in those first few years of their lives we have to help our youngsters carry the familial love they experience at home to the whole family of God.

We can do this by introducing them early to the community of faith: bringing them to Mass as babies, enrolling them in the parish preschool program, taking them as they grow older to serve at the soup kitchen or sort food for the Thanksgiving baskets. If we get involved in our parish community, our children can meet and interact with their peers as well as adults and experience the love that binds God's community. Healthy seeds can be planted to bear all sorts of good fruit in their futures.

FAMILY RESPONSE

Talk about how brothers and sisters should treat each other. Come up with a list of ten things they should expect from each other. Make sure standing up for each other and protecting each other is on the list.

PERSONAL RESPONSE

How can people tell that you are a Christian? What do you want to remember from last week? What are you looking forward to next week? What are your concerns?