

SUNDAY GOSPEL BIBLE SHARING



Wednesday Dec 11th, for the 3rd Sunday in Advent

OPENING PRAYER: Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ever faithful to your promises and ever close to our Church, the earth rejoices in hope of the Savior's coming and looks forward with longing to his return at the end of time. Prepare our hearts and remove the sadness that hinders us from feeling the joy and hope which his presence will bestow. For he is Lord forever and ever. Amen.

- In the words of Saint Benedict, "Listen with the ears of your heart."
- Please note a word, phrase, or verse that seemed to really catch your notice.
- A volunteer slowly read aloud today's passage Afterwards, we have a few minutes of silent reflection.

READING OF THE ASSIGNED GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

Luke 3:10-18

10 And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?"

11 He said to them in reply, "Whoever has two tunics should share with the person who has none. And whoever has food should do likewise."

12 Even tax collectors came to be baptized and they said to him, "Teacher, what should we do?"^j

13 He answered them, "Stop collecting more than what is prescribed."

14 Soldiers also asked him, "And what is it that we should do?" He told them, "Do not practice extortion, do not falsely accuse anyone, and be satisfied with your wages."

15^k Now the people were filled with expectation, and all were asking in their hearts whether John might be the Messiah.

16* John answered them all, saying,¹ “I am baptizing you with water, but one mightier than I is coming. I am not worthy to loosen the thongs of his sandals. He will baptize you with the holy Spirit and fire.

17 His winnowing fan* is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”^m

18 Exhorting them in many other ways, he preached good news to the people.

Notes:

* [3:16] He will baptize you with the holy Spirit and fire: in contrast to John’s baptism with water, Jesus is said to baptize with the holy Spirit and with fire. From the point of view of the early Christian community, the Spirit and fire must have been understood in the light of the fire symbolism of the pouring out of the Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2:1–4); but as part of John’s preaching, the Spirit and fire should be related to their purifying and refining characteristics (Ez 36:25–27; Mal 3:2–3). See note on Mt 3:11.

* [3:17] Winnowing fan: see note on Mt 3:12.

QUESTIONS FOR SHARING

1. If you asked John the Baptist what you must do this Advent to become a better Christian, what might his answer be? 3. What gives you joy? What steals your joy?
2. St. Thomas Aquinas once said: “No one can live without joy. That is why one deprived of spiritual joys must turn to carnal joys.” Comment.
3. What might help you to live a more (Christian) joyful life?
4. Name one thing today’s Gospel says to us that we disciples of Jesus need to heed and act on.

Commentary

In the verses prior to today's Gospel, John has been issuing a strong call to repentance as the way to prepare for the coming of the Messiah. Some in the crowds open their hearts to John's message and ask him three times: "What must we do?" Although John himself lives an austere life removed from the ordinary pursuits of people, he does not ask his inquirers to dissociate themselves from their own lives or occupations. Rather, he challenges them to "bloom where they are planted," carrying out their integrity. All of the Baptist's instructions are relational in nature. "Do what you can to relate to others in a fair and just way." John is very concrete in his responses. He tells one group: "Share your extras." He tells tax collectors: "Be just and fair." He tells the soldiers: "Quit bullying people" and "Don't give false witness." Part two of today's Gospel seeks to clarify the confusion about John's identity. John is not the Messiah. His role is to prepare people for the coming of the Messiah. He is a signpost pointing people to Jesus. He seeks to help his listeners to convert their desires into appropriate and authentic words and works. As you will see in his response, John, the fiery preacher, shows himself to be remarkably practical. He speaks of the "winnowing fan" (a tool for separating wheat from chaff) that Jesus will use to clear his threshing floor. The last verses are intended to scare the hardhearted who see no need for repentance. But for those who are making a reasonable effort to turn their lives entirely over to God (a lifetime task), there is no reason to fear.

IS THERE A CAUSE FOR GRATITUDE THIS WEEK?

IS THERE A PRAYER REQUEST YOU HAVE?

CLOSING PRAYER - The Lord's Prayer

Bible Sharing Parish Hall and Zoom
Wednesday, Dec 11 6:30 – 7:30pm
Weekly on Wednesday
Zoom Meeting

Description: Blessed Sacrament is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Blessed Sacrament's Zoom Meeting

Time: Dec 11, 2024 06:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Please download and import the following iCalendar (.ics) files to your calendar system.

Weekly: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/tZolduisqDosE923wHRoszXqNBSkCL57ORPg/ics?icsToken=98tyKuGhpjorHtKTthCORpx5Goj4d-jwpiFdj_oPzwjNMS9AeDvnGMBxOZFTRY

Blessed Sacrament is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85136740699?pwd=Q2pXLzdzZFdNNU1NajVpeEtKUohJQTo9>

Meeting ID: 811 6265 5618

Passcode: 280607