**FOR THE WEEKEND OF DEC. 15-16, 2024**

Third Sunday in Advent

**Gospel Reading**

Lk 3:10-18

And the crowds asked him [John], “What then should we do?”

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.”

Even tax collectors came to be baptized and they said to him, “Teacher, what should we do?” He answered them, “Stop collecting more than what is prescribed.”

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.”

Now the people were filled with expectation, and all were asking in their hearts whether John might be the Messiah. John answered them all, saying, “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. 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.”

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

**Intercession**

During this Advent season of reflection and preparation, may we act with justice and share our bounty with those in need through the *Catholic Ministry Appeal*.

**Copy for Bulletin Announcement**

Last week we focused of spending time in quiet prayer as a way to make straight the path toward our Lord this Advent. This week we shift gears and concentrate on *acting* on God’s love for us. Those who have gathered around John the Baptist, including tax collectors and soldiers, repeatedly ask him, “What should we *do*?” His response is always some variation of “Use your power and position in society justly and share your good fortune with those less fortunate.”

John abides by his own command. Many who listen to him preach mistake him for the Promised One. He quickly disabuses them of this notion, saying, that “…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.”

It is easy to fall into the trap of our own self-importance. But Advent is a time to remember that Christ did not come to serve the mighty exclusively. He humbled Himself, born into humanity as a helpless infant completely reliant on Mary and Joseph’s care. He entered His ministry, allowing John to baptize Him as if He were flawed and in need of the healing waters. Simply put, He is willing to meet us where we are at, including in our sinfulness.

Christmas is fast approaching. As we continue with December’s festivities, let us also remember John’s call to serve and give of ourselves, to share our good fortune – the “tunics and food” of today’s Gospel –with those who have less. Please remember the *Catholic Ministry Appeal* in your year-end giving.

**Copy for Pulpit Announcement**

Luke shares the beginning of Jesus’ ministry, beginning with Christ’s baptism in the Jordan River. Prior to this event, Jesus lived a quiet life in Nazareth with his parents. Now our Lord would fulfill His purpose in sharing the good news of God’s unfathomable love for us.

Yes, Advent is a preparation for Christ’s birth. But, as today’s Gospel reminds us, it is also preparation for Christ’s ministry and eventual death on a cross. He came to save humanity, first with his birth and then through his death and rising. He came to preach and teach, to heal the sick and lame, forgive the sinful, to serve all people.

This kind of love should spur us to action. The joy it brings cannot be contained. How can we not rejoice in prayer and deed? Please prayerfully consider supporting the *Catholic Ministry Appeal* as a way of acknowledging that all good gifts come from God, including His Son, our Savior.

**Social Media Post/Content**

Photo: One person sharing food or clothing with another

Header: “What then should we do?” – Luke 3:10

Copy: John the Baptist says, “Whoever has two tunics should share with the person who has none. And whoever has food should do likewise.” Follow John’s advice and prayerfully consider giving to our parish *Catholic Ministry Appeal* by sharing with those have none. You can be Christ’s hands here on earth.