

Commentary on the Gospel for Wed, Jan 3rd 2018

The days of Advent flew by for those of us who are older, and no doubt, dragged on for those who are younger. Then, it seems, our outward celebration of Jesus' birth at Christmas did not last long enough. We are left, though, with a warm sensation like the calming glow that embers of the fires of Christmas celebrations leave with us. Now, in the early days of January, we face again anticipation, watching, and waiting for the life and the ministry of the savior to unfold for us.

John the Baptist in today's gospel reading, was preaching and baptizing a group of his followers when he saw that his relative, Jesus, was coming toward them; John had already baptized Jesus. He told those gathered that he had "seen the Spirit come down like a dove from the sky and remained upon him" when Jesus was baptized. The Father had indicated to John that the one on whom the Spirit remained would baptize with the Holy Spirit." Jesus was that person; he is the savior, the Son of God. The importance of the gift of God's Son now began to be apparent to those listening to John, and now, anyone who is open to the message of Jesus. He does dwell in and among us.

John, the Evangelist, in the first reading for today, reminds us that Jesus came to us to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. No one who remains in him sins. We know that the Lord has come, and we know his words. We may now begin to feel that we may know Jesus through the glimpses of his life and words, but to be truly "in him" we must live in accordance with his example. Act out of deep love and sacrifice for others. We need to make sure that Jesus is always a part of what we do. All the ends of the earth, writes the psalmist, have seen the saving power of God. When we "sing our new song to the Lord" this year, let it be a renewal of our life in Jesus and his way.

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