

REFLECTION

By **Melissa Cedillo**, Loretto Volunteers

"I am not worthy to loosen the thongs of his sandals."
- Luke 3:10-18



The *third* Sunday of Advent is often marked by the theme of faithfulness.

Specifically, in Luke's Gospel, we are called to be faithful to God's basic creation, the Earth. This reading begins in similar way that most prayers start, "What should we do?" or even more simply, "How can we be faithful?"

John the Baptist responds by telling people to shed themselves of excess in order for all to have what they need. While objects like coats, food, wages, and taxes help to live a dignified life, there is something significant in remembering that our bodies also desire the natural gifts of God. Towards the end of this reading, Christ is named for the first time. It is also here that the elements water and fire, and the harvest items of wheat and chaff, are introduced.

Remembering Christ as water and fire, and reading of wheat and chaff, reminds me of the power of being connected to creation. Finding God's presence in the smell of fresh white flowers or hearing God's humor through my housemate's laugh. Returning to the question, "What should we do?" the answer may simply be to turn outwards - to what has been made pure.

PRAYER

Advent translates to "coming". While we each prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ, the end of the year, and the beginning of a new year, may we pray: For those who make up our own communities, that we may nourish each other.

For those who accompany us in our day-to-day lives, that we may see God's gifts in them. For our natural Earth, that we may tend to it with love and care. For one another, that we may use our God-given gifts to lift each other up.

Focus: COMMUNITY

Most frequently, when I turn myself outwards, it is usually towards my volunteer community. My community consists of four beautiful women. For me, these women are the most organic examples of creation and kinship. I desire their support while I discern my future. I long for their companionship. They replenish me after a long day. Each woman is unique, one offers a warm embrace every night, one fills me with joy, one teaches me compassion, and one shows me grace. They each illuminate the natural gifts God has blessed them with.

SERVICE SUGGESTION

I invite you to turn outwards. Plan to spend intentional time with your community. Acknowledge each other and affirm the natural gifts that each member holds. Ask - what parts of nature are surrounding you? How can you take better care of them? It is a simple act of being present, but it is in doing so that we can sit and enjoy creation while we wait for the coming of Christ.

