

Advent Communal Penance Service
Homily ~ December 13, 2011

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The Catholic Community of
St. John the Evangelist &
Blessed Sacrament

Did you hear the story about the woman who looked out her kitchen window on Monday morning to notice her neighbor hanging out her laundry to dry? She noticed that the whites looked grey and the coloreds looked dull. “Such a shame. That woman doesn’t know how to wash her clothes clean,” she said to her husband.

The same thing happened the next Monday. But the third Monday, on my, what a change! The whites sparkled in the sunlight and the colored clothes were radiant. Finally, the woman thought to herself, that neighbor lady has discovered how laundry should be done. When she told her husband how much better the neighbor’s laundry looked, he said, “Well, it should. Last Tuesday I washed your kitchen window.”

So often the way we see things is conditioned by our own “dirty windows.” What seems to be a problem “out there” is actually a problem “in here,” in us, in the way we perceive a situation.

First a man named John came. He appeared in the desert and proclaimed a Baptism of Repentance for the forgiveness of sins. He was clothed in camel’s hair with a leather belt around his waist. His purpose was to call people to repentance, to recognize their own dirty windows, remove the filth from their own dirty windows so they could see the Lord more clearly, and behold him when he came.

Our purpose is similar tonight. To come before God to ask his Holy Spirit to open our eyes, to see ourselves as we really are, to recognize that what we have done or what we have failed to do has kept the windows of our souls from being totally clear and clean. We are much like the lady who insisted the neighbor woman didn’t know how to wash her clothes clean. It was not the neighbor lady’s inability; it was her own dirty windows that prevented her from seeing the way things really were.

So with the help of the Holy Spirit, let us brighten the windows of our soul so that we may see clearly for the Lord to come.

St. John the Evangelist
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