

**SHARING THE FAITH: WEEKLY EMAIL DEVOTION
FOR THE WEEK ENDING DECEMBER 6, 2009**

Reading for the week ending December 6, 2009, Second Sunday of Advent:

MALACHI 3:1-4

"Look! I'm sending my messenger on ahead to clear the way for me. Suddenly, out of the blue, the Leader you've been looking for will enter his Temple—yes, the Messenger of the Covenant, the one you've been waiting for. Look! He's on his way!" A Message from the mouth of God-of-the-Angel-Armies.

But who will be able to stand up to that coming? Who can survive his appearance?

He'll be like white-hot fire from the smelter's furnace. He'll be like the strongest lye soap at the laundry. He'll take his place as a refiner of silver, as a cleanser of dirty clothes. He'll scrub the Levite priests clean, refine them like gold and silver, until they're fit for God, fit to present offerings of righteousness. Then, and only then, will Judah and Jerusalem be fit and pleasing to God, as they used to be in the years long ago.

Faith Questions:

1. Is there a place in your life that you might need God's help with cleaning up? Take some time now to confess and invite God into the dirty places that you keep hidden from the world.
2. The refining process that makes metals pure requires white-hot fire. In the same way, the work that we do with God to become better people can be a painful process. What difficult time in your life might God have used to help you grow? What did you learn?
3. When Jesus was born, people had different reactions to his birth. Some people, like the shepherds, were excited about it, and came to visit, bearing gifts. Others, like King Herod, felt threatened by Jesus' arrival, and used their power to try and control the situation. How do you feel about Jesus' arrival? Are you excited, threatened, or a little of both? Why? What might the coming of Jesus mean for those of us who enjoy holding on to our power?
4. Malachi, the author of this text, was a messenger to the Israelites during a time of complacency and comfort. How are we at Trinity like the Israelites during Malachi's day? What might Malachi have to say to us as modern people of God? How can we work to restore our dedication to the Lord during this Advent season of preparation?
5. What might Malachi have to say to the world today? What role do we as Christians have in bringing that message to people?

Let us pray:

Hello, Lord. Help me to prepare a place in my life for you. Refine me and make me into the person who you made me to be. Help me to let go of my power and allow you to lead me.

For whom else, and for what else, shall we pray? (Insert your own prayer here)
Amen.

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