

December 4, 2016, Second Sunday of Advent, ^{Mt. 3:1-12}, by r.j.tusky

...every tree that does NOT bear good fruit... will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Once upon a time, there was a program that dealt with the removal of unwanted tattoos—especially gang related tattoos. Once the word got out, over a 1,000 letters poured in from young people from all over the country, wanting to know more about this program.

Because of this remarkable inquiry, the L.A. School District & a local cable television co. produced a film called, **“Untattoo You.”** It told about the dangers of amateur tattooing and showed how difficult it was to remove small tattoos from arms & faces and larger tattoos from chests, backs, & legs.

The starring actors of the film... were the young people themselves! They talked frankly about why they were tattooed in the first place and why they, now, wanted the tattoos removed. The film eventually won a national award and is now distributed throughout the country.

The story behind the film, *Untattoo You*, illustrates an important point.

What exactly is that important point?’ you ask.

Well, I’m glad you asked that question!

We all do things in our lives that we regret and would like to ‘re-do’ or simply ‘erase’... like it never happened. Realize, this is not only true of young people. It is quite true of older people, too. We all have our... ‘skeletons.’

For example: if I stopped for ½ a minute, I am sure all the people in this church or within the sound of my cyber-spaced-voice could recall at least a ½ dozen things they’d like to ‘do over’ or ‘erase’ from their lives. The truly tragic thing about all this is that so many people regret what they did, **BUT**... don’t know what to do about it now. So, they live with the ‘mistake.’ Whenever guilt or remorse surfaces, they do their best to put it out of their mind. **BUT**... it usually turns out to be a losing battle. It never, really, goes away.

Someone once said: **‘I have committed many follies. I have a sensitive conscience and I have done things in my life I am unable to entirely forget. If I had been fortunate enough to be a Catholic, I could have delivered myself from them in Confession and, after performing the Penance imposed, enjoyed Sacramental Absolution and put them out of my mind forever.’**

As you well know, Jesus died so **‘sins could be forgiven.’** We must learn to forgive ourselves, as well, lest we insult Christ-crucified. I often wonder if we Catholics realize how truly blessed we are.

Just as many young people across the country rejoiced when they discovered a way to remove their unwanted tattoos, so, we Catholics can rejoice that Jesus gave us a ‘**way out**’ of our haunting trap, a way to remove our sins. Advent season reminds us, every year, of this great gift Jesus made available to us and it urges us to use it. Doing this not only gives us peace of mind, but also, helps us to prepare for the day when we will stand in judgment before God for what we have **done** in our corner of the vineyard **and** for what we have **failed to do**.

This Wed.-a-week, Dec.14, in both our parishes...St Francis & St. Isaac, we will **'have the light on.'** We priests, in every parish throughout the diocese, will be hearing Confessions in the Sacrament of Reconciliation from 6 to 9 pm... and longer if necessary. What a wonderful time Advent is to remove our unwanted, **'spiritual'** tattoos & to begin a brand new, fresh life in Jesus.

I now close, paraphrasing a prayer written 1,600 years ago by a Christian named Origen:

"Jesus, my feet are dusty and dirty.

**Pour water into your basin and come wash my feet,
as you washed the feet of the 12 apostles at the Last Supper.**

I realize that I am terribly bold in asking you to do this.

BUT, I fear the warning that you gave to Peter when you said to him:

"If I do not wash your feet, you can have no companionship with me."

Wash my feet, then, Jesus, because I DO want your companionship—

more than anything else in the world."

May Almighty God, our Abba, bless you, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.