

second SUNDAY OF ADVENT

■ LIGHT THE ADVENT WREATH

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit ... Come Lord Jesus, be our light! Help our lives bear good fruit.

■ READ THE GOSPEL for the Second Sunday of Advent (Cycle A) Matthew 3:1-12

“Therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.”

■ REFLECT WITH A STORY

It sounds like John was having a bad day. The Pharisees and Sadducees arrive on the scene and John nearly loses it. He calls them a brood of vipers, compares them to stones and then tells them that if they don't change their sinful ways, they'll be cut down like dead trees. He says, “Every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.”

It's a harsh image and one that might be difficult for us to relate to. Why would we destroy trees that don't bear good fruit? But farmers around the world today who depend on their fruit trees for their income know that one, bad tree can hurt their entire crop.

Take Fidencio, for example. He is a coffee farmer who lives in Narino. Fidencio and his family's well-being depends on his ability to continue to produce good fruit. To do that, he has to pay close attention to the coffee trees that do not bear good fruit, and make sure they do not affect the rest of the crop. This is a very real concern for farmers like Fidencio, because many coffee trees where he lives are infected with a deadly fungus called leaf rust that can spread to other trees. Sometimes the farmers have to cut down infected trees to save the rest of the crop.

Just as Fidencio must rid his coffee farm of disease that will damage his trees, we must prune our lives of the things that damage our relationship with God, ourselves and others. By doing so, we can bear the good fruit John the Baptist talks about.



Photo by Oscar Leiva/Silverlight for CRS

PRAY

Creator God, you are the master gardener. Help me to bear good fruit in my life—for myself, for my family and for my community. Amen

REFLECT

What do I need to stop doing or get rid of in my life in order to bear good fruit?

ACT

This week, prune your life of one or more material items you no longer need and donate them to charity. Oftentimes the clutter of everyday objects prevents us from focusing on what leads us to Christ.

GIVE

Support farmers like Fidencio by purchasing coffee that bears good fruit! Warm your heart this holiday season with coffee from CRS partners. Visit crsfairtrade.org.