

Whose children?

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Today's Gospel lesson, though not a traditional baptismal text, embodies the spirit of the sacrament: the ones bringing the children to Jesus are not necessarily parents; they are "people" moved to care for these little ones. This choice of language leads us to ask, if the adults bringing the children to Jesus are not their parents, then who are they? Why do these men and women stand up to the disciples for the sake of children that are not biologically theirs?

Perhaps it is because they feel a deep sense of love and duty to these children. Perhaps they know the children will grow up all too soon, thus the sense of urgency to place them in the presence of the Messiah.

As a new parent, I am grateful for the people in our lives who, at my daughter's baptism, will promise to lift her into the presence of Jesus when my arms have grown too tired. As they walk with her through years of Sunday school and summer camp, Christmas pageants and Bible school, I pray that before she—like the Pharisees—becomes too preoccupied with the more legalistic aspects of faith, our village of faith will help instill in her the deep love Jesus has for her, and for all God's children.