Thirty First Sunday in Ordinary Time — November 1, 2020

From the Desk of Fr. Leo

In the popular movie "The Godfather", there was an appalling scene at the end. The young "godfather" was posing as a Catholic godfather to a child, who was being baptized at the baptismal font, and simultaneously the same man was engineering the ruthless murder of his opponents. Here was a real travesty of religion: posing as godfather in the sacred ceremony of baptism and in truth being a murderous villain.

If anything is offensive to the Lord it is sham religion: an external show of piety with a complete lack of true religious sentiments in the heart. That is what the prophet decries in the First Reading this weekend: the people claim to be God's chosen ones, and come to his holy temple, but make a mockery of the Lord by offering things totally unacceptable. The priests too are blame worthy for their lack of sincerity in carrying out their holy office.

This is what Christ holds against the Pharisees in this weekend's gospel. They do not practice what they preach. Their piety is only external and their motive for performing acts of piety is sheer vanity, to be seen by their fellowmen, to "show off" their piety on their sleeves. Such conduct is not done to please the Lord but to ingratiate themselves with men. They constantly need attention, marks of respect, flattery. They abuse the title of Rabbi and Teacher by their unworthy motives, and they do not deserve to be called father of the people, for they are far from representing God's fatherhood to his people. Such is the bane of hypocrisy, externalized piety without a soul. It is a shell without a body, a false face hiding empty reality.

Is piety today sometimes used also as a false mask for the lack of true interior sentiments of religion? Do not people at times "salve" their consciences by some show of external piety such as donations to the Church or some good cause, yet with their name in large letters written all over the gift? "When you give alms," Jesus told his disciples, "do not sound the trumpet before you". In fact, he told them that their right hand should not know what their left hand is giving away, which is an emphatic way of saying that when they give alms, they ought not make much over it, it ought to be so unnoticed that if possible one hand wouldn't know what the other was doing!

The Lord does not forbid external manifestation of piety with the proper intention, for he says in the Sermon on the Mount: "Your light must shine before all so that they may see goodness in your acts and give praise to your Father in heaven". (Matthew 5:16) Note well the motive which the Lord demands of us: our light is to shine in order to please God so that others are drawn to him. The pharisaic spirit on the contrary is centered in Self. Actions of piety are done to win respect and praise for oneself. This is piety without a soul. It is not practiced to please God, but to win the approval of people.

Fr. Leo Alban ***Asuncion***

Though we are not able to meet together during this week, please keep these intentions in your personal prayers, as Father will continue to include them in his private masses.

Mass Intentions for the Week

Tues.	**November 3**	**N/A**
Special Intentions		
Wed.	**November 4**	**N/A**
Special Intentions		
Thur.	**November 5**	**N/A**
Special Intentions		
Fri.	**November 6**	**N/A**
Craig Tacconi †		Bill & Diane Thomas
Sat.	**November 7**	**4:30PM**
David Botta †		Jensen Family
Sun.	**November 8**	**9:00AM**
Medoro Pagni †		ICF #14
Port Costa		**11:00AM**
Dolores Koehne		Mike & Elena

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