From the Desk of Fr. Leo

One of the strongest instincts of a human being is the desire to belong, to be included in a group, and even hope to be part of the "in crowd." It is not without reason that people of all ages tend to form clubs and organizations. Always to be left out, always to be excluded is a cause for sadness; but on the other hand, always to be counted in, always to be sought after, can be an excuse for complacency.

It was the instinctive desire to belong that prompted someone from the crowd listening to Jesus to ask, "Lord, are they few in number who are to be saved?" Jesus was probably asked this same question countless of times during his preaching about the kingdom. Among many of the Jews, the question of whether the Gentiles would be saved as part of the kingdom was generally not even considered. They believed that descent from Abraham, together with the faithful observance of the Law, was what counted. The question asked of Jesus, therefore, referred only to the Jews. Apparently, the man who asked the question expected Jesus to give him a guarantee that he would be saved simply because he was a descendant of Abraham.

First, Jesus refused to answer the question about members as irrelevant. He insisted that the people should not be concerned about how many are saved., but rather that people should not work to make sure of their own salvation, regardless of what others may do. Secondly, he shook the man out of his complacency by declaring that blood descent from Israel's ancestry is no guarantee of entrance into the kingdom. Salvation is not automatic for anybody. Jesus condemned the smugness that lay behind the man's question, and added a stern warning that one must work hard to gain entrance through the narrow door that leads into the kingdom.

That the words of Jesus apply to us as Catholics is obvious. We were incorporated into the new people of God, the Church, not through physical descent from Abraham, but through the spiritual generation of baptism. Just being a Catholic, however, is no guarantee of salvation. Nor is it proper for us to sit back and ask a lot of irrelevant questions about the salvation of those who are not Catholics. First, such questions often imply that since we as Catholics will be saved, it is only natural to wonder how people who are not Catholics can possibly be saved. Secondly, the asking of such questions expends energy on something that is entirely up to God in his wisdom and mercy. This is not to say that we are not to work for the salvation of all of humankind or try to win converts to the Church, Our Lord's point simply is that we cannot take our own salvation as a matter of course. It is something we must work at, and work hard. There is no room in God's kingdom for the smug or complacent person.

To gain entrance into Gods kingdom, more is required than mere membership in the Church. We must try to do God's will in every aspect of our lives.

Fr. Leo Alban Asuncion

Mass Intentions for the Week

Tues.	**August 23**	**11:00AM**
Christina Quiapo		Mom & Dad
Wed.	**August 24**	**11:00AM**
Johnny Bianchi†		Family
Thur.	**August 25**	**11:00PM**
Johnny Bianchi†		Family
Fri.	**August 26**	**11:00AM**
Theresa & Edgar Allan (Anniversary)		Mom & Dad
Sat.	**August 27**	**4:30PM**
Johnny Bianchi †		Family
Sun.	**August 28**	**9:00AM**
Special Intentions		
Port Costa		**11:00AM**
People of the Parish		

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