First Sunday of Lent — February 26, 2023

From the Desk of Fr. Leo

I want to suggest a project for lent: humility. Yes,humility. What a quaint word that sounds like, how old-fashioned and even a bit demeaning. Many of us have probably had it with humility. We hear the old tapes played again by parents, friends, the ministers of the church: "Don't get too big for your britches...don't be uppity...pride comes before the fall...well, mister (or miss), just who do you think you are? You really think you're somebody, don't you?" Everyone of us has heard phrases like that sometimes in our lives, and we don't like it one bit. After all, we should be somebody. We want to achieve, to make our mark on the world. We don't want to be put down; in fact, we avoid it at all costs. We want to be looked up to, to be respected, and to be liked. What's the use of humility then?

I don't care very much for the old-fashioned meaning of the word humility. But there's a trick to the word. Humility shouldn't mean a put down. It means being close to the humus, the Latin word for the earth. Humility is being down to earth. Real humility isn't being less than yourself; it means being both no greater than yourself and no less than yourself. Real humility means being honest, being real.

This is the secret of the readings proclaimed from the scriptures this weekend. They are an important kick-off for Lent, the church's annual retreat and effort at self- examination, the church's traditional time for preparing itself to receive new members at the Easter Vigil.

Consider the gospel, St. Matthew's account of the temptations of Jesus. The tempter is saying to Jesus: "Go for it. Be the Messiah your own way. Perform impressive feats of magic and wonder. That's what's going to make people, listen to you and follow you. Then you'll really be the kind of Messiah the world wants." In other words, do it my way, bow down before me and worship me; do it the way the world would expect you do.

And how does Jesus respond? He responds to the temptations by refusing to be somebody he isn't. He responds by being humble. There's a profound lesson here for us all. The true way to be like God is not to grab at it, not try to make ourselves into little gods, but to accept the human condition. This is the root of sin: that we're willing to accept our human condition for what it is, unwilling to recognize that life is full of challenges, pain and struggle as well as joys.

My suggestion is the following: work this lent at being yourself by being humble. Know that God has made you to participate in that wonderful and sometimes scary project of being human. But take courage. God doesn't ask us to do it alone. It's through the obedience of one person Jesus, that we've all participated in reconciliation with God. So as we turn to the table where the love of that same Lord Jesus is poured out for us to be shared with one another, let us rejoice in the invitation of lent, an invitation to be ourselves, to be down to earth, to be humble.

Fr. Leo Alban Asuncion

Mass Intentions for the Week

Tues.	**February 28**	**11:00AM**
Siena Jackson (surgery success)		Olivia & Marvin
Wed.	**March 1**	**11:00AM**
Chris Almeida (Special intentions)		Olivia & Marvin
Thur.	**March 2**	**11:00AM**
Special Intentions		
Fri.	**March 3**	**11:00AM**
Special Intentions		
Sat.	**March 4**	**4:30PM**
Bill Valli †		Hoffmans
Sun.	**March 5**	**9:00AM**
Father Ciaran Dillon †		
Port Costa		**11:00AM**
People of the Parish		

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