Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time — October 1, 2023

From the Desk of Fr. Leo

Who is responsible? During the 1970's, this question was frequently asked in racism-awareness workshops and black and white encounters in colleges and universities. At some point in the process, white students would address persons of color and say: "Why are you so angry at us? Are we responsible for what our ancestors did? We are not slave owners. We aren't the ones who kept the vote away. Why blame us?" Locked in their own defensiveness, the white students could not hear the message implicit in their questions: we are not responsible. We are not responsible for racism in society today. We are innocent victims of something our parents did. Look elsewhere, not at us. We are not racist.

The people of Israel were locked in a similar defensiveness in this weekend's first reading from the prophet Ezekiel. "We are not responsible," the people claim. "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge. "Parents and grandparents are to blame for the current suffering and exile. The present generation is an innocent victim. Lashing out at God, the people ask, "Why are you so angry with us? You are unjust, O God."

In response, the word of the Lord through the prophet Ezekiel comes back three-fold: as a welcome word, as a critiquing word, and as an imperative word.

As a welcome word: "I am a God of compassion. I do not blame the sins of the ancestors on the children. Each generation is shaped by the heritage of good and bad it has received. But I take no joy or satisfaction in the painful results of human wickedness."

The welcome word becomes a critiquing word. "I am a God of justice. I hold all persons accountable for their own actions. Blaming others for what they have done or failed to do is no excuse for personal irresponsibility. There is no evasion for each person's struggle to live faithfully. People are not as guiltless as they claim or imagine.

And finally, the Lord speaks an imperative word. I want life and not death. Change is possible. A new heart and a new spirit can come because one is not bound by past generations or even by one's own past sins. Repent and live.

A welcome word, a critiquing word, an imperative word. Responsible for our own faithful response to the God who created all of humanity in the divine image. We remained silent.

Where could we find what we needed to confront the racism in our own heart and bring a change? What would enable us to repent of sin, that which separates us from brothers and sisters, separate us from ourselves, separate us from God. Who or what would help us respond to that imperative word of turn and live?

Fr. Leo Alban Asuncion

Mass Intentions for the Week

Tues.	**October 3**	**11:00AM**
Michael Bottini		Bill & Diane
Wed.	**October 4**	**11:00AM**
Miville Cristobal		Lily Militar
Thur.	**October 5**	**11:00AM**
Lily Militar		Lydia
Fri.	**October 6**	**11:00AM**
Jorgelia B. Quiapo †		Ed & Mae
Sat.	**October 7**	**4:30PM**
Raymond & Machiko Arcega		Jong & Alma
Sun.	**October 8**	**9:00AM**
Jorge, Tomasa & Jose & Manuel		
Port Costa		**11:00AM**
People of the Parish		

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