Twenty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time — September 3, 2023

From the Desk of Fr. Leo

Most Christians in the United States have the impression that we live in a society that is reasonably favorable toward religion. In many senses they are right, of course. We experience no great persecution for holding our faith. We have an amazing range of freedom to express our religion and to commend it to others.

So it would be easy to conclude that our spiritual situation has very little danger, but this would be a mistake. For one thing, the very openness of our society toward any and all religion can give the impression that it doesn't make much difference what we believe or if we get around to considering the claim of God upon our lives.

But the more serious danger that confronts Christians in the United States is related to the great prosperity and affluence that most of us enjoy. Research has shown that very few Americans think of themselves as well off. There is too much sense of struggle and precariousness in most of our lives for that. But judged by how most of the people on this planet live, the vast majority of Americans, even those who do not have too much, are very well off indeed.

The Holy Bible warns us again and again that while God created the world full of good things and good opportunities, nevertheless all of this can become a temptation to spiritual blindness and indifference. We can be so busy with our things, or with our responsibilities, or with our families, that life rushes by and we give little thought to what is deepest or most important. Dare I suggest that such things can happen even to those who faithfully attend church and receive the sacraments? We mean well, but we have so much on our minds that we never quite settle down to thinking about our personal faith in God.

So you see, it is not just the crazy street preacher who warns people against the world and all the dangers that it contains. All Christians ought to understand the world's dangers and have a strategy for coping with the difficulty. The lessons for this weekend's readings remind us of this very basic point.

Our Lord in explaining to those who follow him in every generation that the way of discipleship is the way of the cross, has to warn us. Whoever holds on to life will surely lose it. What will it profit us to gain the whole world and lose our souls?

Here is the danger: such a path to destruction begins not with setting out to defy God and to identity with the world in its wickedness and sin. The path to conformity, to worldliness, to spiritual destruction begins with small, seemingly harmless steps. We are busy, we are tired, we are not ready for anything serious, we are just doing our duty. But eventually such small steps and such rationalizations can close our hearts and our minds to being able to hear the word of God at all.

Fr. Leo Alban Asuncion

Mass Intentions for the Week

Tues.	**September 5**	**11:00AM**
Regina Villanueva		Lily Militar
Wed.	**September 6**	**11:00AM**
MariLou Padilla (healing)		Gina
Thur.	**September 7**	**11:00AM**
Jorgelia Quiapo † (birthday)		Dolly
Fri.	**September 8**	**11:00AM**
Maura Bernardino†		Bob† & Lydia
Sat.	**September 9**	**4:30PM**
Lena McCrossen †		The Hoffmans
Sun.	**September 10**	**9:00AM**
Camilo & Jayne Sevidal		Pena Family
Port Costa		**11:00AM**
People of the Parish		

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