Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time — February 11, 2024

From the Desk of Fr. Leo

People are willing to undergo a great deal of trouble and expense in order to have their health restored. They submit willingly to a physician, undergo frequent treatments, take expensive medicines, in fact, anything if only they can regain physical health, even though they be at an advanced old age. How many are equally concerned with regaining the health of the inner person, which may have been brought low by the poison of sin, paralyzed by evil habits of long standing, or jeopardized by willful carelessness in thoughts and actions? Yet, what is more important when a person stands before God at the gate of eternity, physical health or the integrity of the inner human being?

Everything in this weekend's Gospel seems to bring before our eyes the penitent sinner who seeks reconciliation and healing from Christ, the great sacrament of God's love. Not as if leprosy were necessarily connected with personal sin, but this weekend's Gospel vividly conjures up to the mind the dispositions required of the penitent sinner, aware of his great need of the Savior; the loving and willing action of that same Savior in the sacrament of healing which he instituted for the express purpose of healing humankind's inner spirit; and the effects as well as the requirements of the sacrament.

The goal of the sacrament of penance is to return to Christ in love. Emphasis shifts in the new rite of penance from merely seeking remission of sin to reconciliation with God in Christ. Christ is the Way God wants to encounter all of humankind. He instituted the sacrament of reconciliation so that this encounter takes place through the ministers of his Church. Through Christ and the ministry of the Church, the sinner is reconciled to God. So, the heart of this sacrament is meeting Christ personally, as the leper in the Gospel. For Christ is present in his sacraments, and by means of this sacrament he reaches into the heart of humankind to heal it of its wounds and defects, and fill it with his love. Thus, Jesus reached out to touch the leper, though the leper was himself one of the untouchables. The Savior is far more eager for the love of the penitent than the latter is for forgiveness and reconciliation. Again, we are reminded of the good shepherd who sought out the lost sheep until he found it, and then carried it back home close to his heart.

Like the leper who is totally renewed in bodily integrity and can live an entirely new life not admissible for him before, so the repentant sinner, renewed in God's love, walks in the newness of the Christ-life, all his or her actions and motivations taking on a renewed direction. His or her aim now is to be more conformed to the image of Christ, his or her Savior, and that will mean a thorough conversion from sinful ways.

Fr. Leo Alban Asuncion

Mass Intentions for the Week

Tues.	**February 13**	**11:00AM**
Wanda Abbondanza†		John Collins
Wed.	**February 14**	**9AM, 6PM**
Valentino Lacsina (birthday)		Lacsina Family
Thur.	**February 15**	**11:00AM**
Carmen McFarling †		ICF #14
Fri.	**February 16**	**11:00AM**
Vincent Noel Buenaflor †		Buenaflor-Roth Family
Sat.	**February 17**	**4:30PM**
John & Gen Heuser †		Trudi
Sun.	**February 18**	**9AM**
Cecilia Bernas †		Bernas Family
Port Costa		**11:00AM**
People of the Parish		

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