Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Times — February 23, 2025

From the Desk of Fr. Leo

Almost everyone knows the story of how in combat David, the youth, overcame Goliath, the giant. By doing so, David saved the Israelites from a terrible war with the Philistines. The victory won favor from the people of David, but hatred from King Saul. Saul convinced himself that David was his enemy and would try to usurp the throne. He tried without success to kill David. In this weekend's first reading, the tables are turned. David has the opportunity to kill the King, but out of respect for him as the Lord's anointed he refuses to do so. He actually forgives the King for his attacks upon him.

Where today do we find an example like that of David? Surely not among the politicians who assassinate each other with words and TV ads during every political campaign. We have an excellent model, however, in the person of the late Pope John Paul II (now St. John Paul II). After he had recovered from the blatant attack upon his life when he was shot in St. Peter's Square, one of the first things he did was to visit his assailant in prison and offer him forgiveness and reconciliation.

A man falsely accused the late Cardinal Bernardin, Archbishop of Chicago, of having molested him as a youth. The man soon recanted his preposterous story. It would have been understandable if the Cardinal had railed in indignation against his dishonest accuser. Rather the Cardinal sought him out to forgive him.

These are two extraordinary examples of forgiveness. But we look even beyond these two exemplary men to the person of Jesus. Jesus preached compassion, forgiveness, and reconciliation as we learn in this weekend's Gospel. His teaching is very much the opposite of what we hear and see in our society. Jesus also practiced what he preached. Jesus looked out upon those who crucified him and prayed, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they are doing."

We must be a people who follow the teaching and the example of Jesus. We must be that way publicly and privately. For example, some Catholics do not agree with the Pope and the United States Catholic Bishops who are opposed to the death penalty. The Pope and the bishops see clearly that the execution of a human being reduces us to a barbaric state from which the teachings of Jesus would lift us. It is time for Catholics to reflect the values of a vindictive society to embrace the principles of Christ. We must leave to God an appropriate punishment for capital crimes.

In every Mass, we hear the raging words of Christ: "This is the cup of my blood....It will be shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins." Receiving Christ in Holy Communion, partaking of his blood shed for the sake of forgiveness, gives us the strength we need to be a people of forgiveness and reconciliation, and not of hatred and vindictiveness. We can and must be like Christ himself.

Fr. Leo Alban Asuncion

Mass Intentions for the Week

Tues.	**February 25**	**11:00AM**
Special Intentions		
Wed.	**February 26**	**11:00AM**
Special Intentions		
Thur.	**February 27**	**11:00AM**
Thanksgiving		Lacsina Alday Family
Fri.	**February 28**	**11:00AM**
Tony Jacob† (death anniversary)		Your family
Sat.	**March 1**	**4:30PM**
Sheila Elliott †		Bill & Diane
Sun.	**March 2**	**9:00AM**
Richard "lee" Lane †		Buitrago-Cohoon Family
Port Costa		**11:00AM**
People of the Parish		

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