

FROM FATHER DAVE

What a difference a week can make even in the Word of God. Last Sunday, you might recall, Simon Peter encountered Jesus and made a profession of faith in him. As a consequence, Jesus made Peter “the rock” on which he would build his Church. He also gave to Peter the keys of the Kingdom.

This week as Jesus begins to share with his disciples the mystery of his suffering and death that will take place Peter will have none of it. In fact, Peter says, “God forbid, Lord! No such thing shall ever happen to you.”

In response, Jesus rebukes Peter and says, “Get behind me, Satan! You are an obstacle to me. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do.” In this instance, the so-called “rock” has become an obstacle.

The word “Satan” does not have the connotation of the evil one. Rather, it refers to being an adversary or obstacle. Peter does not want Jesus to suffer.

Jesus, however, is crystal clear that if we wish to be his disciples, we must deny ourselves and pick up our cross and follow him. Suffering is inevitable for the disciple.

In many ways, I think we all can identify with Peter since we too ride the roller coaster of life with its ups and downs. Things can change so quickly from week to week. For example, one Sunday we can come to Mass and be on top of the world and the next Sunday we may find ourselves lower than low. Often the reason for this is suffering. None of us enjoy suffering. Pain hurts. How we embrace it can make all the difference, however.

Our sufferings need not be obstacles but opportunities to draw closer to Jesus. The key in this I believe is to resist the temptation to waste our suffering. It is a terrible thing to waste suffering. In every cross, there is an opportunity to give it to God, follow Jesus, and, as my mom used to say, “offer it up.”

In addition to our own personal crosses, the pandemic has yielded all kinds of suffering. Beyond the uncertainties, imposed distances, and restrictions, there is the real suffering of those who contract the virus and those who die from it, along with the utter helplessness of the family. A very dear friend of mine’s mother is afflicted with this terrible evil. The family cannot even be with their mom because of the contagious nature of the virus. Imagine being only able to wave to your dying mom through a window.

Whatever sufferings we may be incurring right now, big or small, let us give them to God as a prayer offering. Let us place them on the altar.



• **Monday, September 7**, is Labor Day. There will be one Mass that day at **9:00 a.m. in the parking lot of Saint Alphonsus**. All are welcome!

- Please know that there is no Eucharistic Adoration the week of **September 6**, due to previously scheduled First Communion Masses.
- Beginning Wednesday, September 16, and continuing for the next four weeks through Wednesday, October 7, Adoration will take place on **Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m.** in Saint Alexis Church.