

NOVEMBER 10 DEACON KEVIN DAUDLIN

Today we remember Saint Leo the Great. Besides being Pope, he was also a great deacon, known for his peacekeeping work. He is remembered widely for convincing Attila the Hun to not plunder Rome. A doctor of the church, he is also known for his great faith and preaching. I am sure he would have a lot to say on today's readings.

Woe to anyone by whom they come! This says so much. For me this is a real eye opener. We tend to think about how we sin. When preparing for confession, I know I do the same thing every time. I look back at what I may have done or know what I have done since my last confession. How have I sinned? Generally, I do not reflect on how I may have caused others to sin. We tend not to put as much emphasis on this, do we?

Jesus makes it sound like this is even worse than what we do to sin. We have to look at this with a lot more seriousness. It is not enough for me to try to avoid sin; I really need to try extra hard to ensure that I am not the source or cause of others sinning.

When we look at positions of authority this can become a trap for this. When we are in charge, it is so easy to steer people in a certain direction or to think a particular way.

We see this all of the time in organizations, our governments even our church leaders on occasion. In our first reading, we see a direct call for our leaders to love righteousness, to seek God with a sincere heart and to not put Him to the test. Our leaders are being asked to rule with justice and set an example for others through their honesty and righteousness.

It is also a reminder for all of us to look, no examine our own hearts and thoughts. To try and avoid dishonesty and especially deception, seeking true guidance and wisdom through the love of God.

As leaders in our churches or communities, we are asked to lead by example not persuasion and deceit. Whether you are part of a church group, community organization, teacher, parent, aunt, uncle and yes even us grandparents, what you do and say influences the decisions of others. Especially those who look up to us. We really do not want to send out the wrong message. We do not want to be the reason someone else does something incorrect or even falls.

“Wisdom will not enter a deceitful soul, or dwell in a body enslaved to sin.” Maybe we become so caught up in what we are doing that we become oblivious, or do not see what we are doing could be wrong. That is why we need to put ourselves in the shoes of those who look up to us as mentors or guides. Even when you think no one is looking, you may be surprised to discover who actually sees you.

I remember very vividly a commercial that came out when smoking first became not such a great thing. A father would sneak out to have a cigarette away from his family, thinking no one really knew. However later on when watching his son playing he was pretending to smoke to be like daddy or even closer to home when my mother would make my father eat the vegetables, especially the ones he hated knowing that we would not eat ours if he did not eat his. You never know who may be watching you

Through all of this God gave us one of the greatest gifts of all time. The ability to forgive, the ability to say I am sorry. “If there is repentance you must forgive. And if that same person sins against you seven times a day, and turns back to you seven times and says, I repent, you must forgive.”

In our humanity, the highest form we can strive for is to be a forgiving person. That is how we can even come close to approaching holiness. God calls on us to aid our neighbour. No matter how many times they

push you away, falters or insults you. We cannot retaliate, because we are called to be holy, we are called to be Christ like.

Many times in our lives people, get stressed, frustrated or so angry that they may lash out at us. What would Jesus do in these situations? He would more than likely hug the other person and say I forgive you.

This is what makes him so great. He could so easily just end it, get rid of everyone and start over. Instead, he forgives us. Why, why does he do this? Because no one has ever shown greater love than He has.

The apostles called on the Lord, "Increase our faith." So He gave them and us the ability to show our faith. The greatest sign of faith is shown through how we forgive others, especially our enemies. The greatest sign of our faith is in how we accept the forgiveness of others.

No matter what happens, what we do or how we pray, we are probably still very likely to sin or cause others to sin. However, we are not a lost cause. When in doubt I like to say this very short prayer, "May the Lord grant us mercy, compassion and the tools that Christ used to bring us back to him." Amen