Third Sunday of Advent — December 14, 2025

From the Desk of Fr. Leo

When the history of the Soviet Union is re-written, as it certainly will be soon, one man will loom large in its recent past. His name is Andrei Sakharov. He died almost thirty years ago. He was a most unlikely prophet, a small,quiet-spoken scholarly man,with none of the attributes usually associated with great public figures. For years, he confronted what must have been the greatest totalitarian regime the world has ever seen. He was a very distinguished scientist, in fact, he was one of Russia's greatest scientist of the past century. He could have had anything the Soviet system had to offer its favorite sons. Instead he chose to fight it, for the freedom and the civil rights of its citizens. For this he paid dearly, spending years in prison and labor camps in Siberia. But he never wavered.

Sakharov was a Russian Jew and in some striking ways bears comparison to that other Jew in Palestine two thousand years ago – St. John the Baptist. His too was a lone "voice crying in the wilderness". He spoke out courageously against the corruption of a powerful regime. He resisted all the blandishment his talents would have earned him. He could have worn fine clothes and lived in palaces by the standards of ordinary Russians in that harsh regime. And when they could not buy his silence, they locked him away. He was in prison when the world first heard of him. From there, his message of dissent escaped, to make disciples in Russia and abroad. He was no "reed swaying in the breeze". His heroic dissent was a contagion which his captors were powerless to contain. Eventually, yielding to world opinion – he had been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize while in prison – they were forced to release him. His health was irretrievably broken. Nevertheless, he continued his crusade. The seed he had sown in the wilderness so many years before was coming to harvest. Then almost within sight of the promised land, he died. Had he lived another few months he might have been, like a Lech Walesa, or a Vaclav Havel, elected President of Russia. But he didn't. Perhaps history will be all the kinder to him because of that.

As Christians, we should cherish our dissidents. So often, today's dissidents are tomorrow's heroes. Recognition, if it comes to all, comes posthumously. They belong in the tradition of St. John the Baptist, whom Christ praised so warmly in this weekend's gospel. Melito of Sardis in the second century wrote:

If you wish to see the mystery of the Lord, it is he who endures many things:
It is he who was Abel murdered, and in Isaac bound, and in Jacob exiled,
And in Joseph sold, and in Moses exposed, and in the lamb slain,
And in the prophets dishonored.

Fr. Leo Alban Asuncion

touch.

Mass Intentions for the Week

Tues.	**December 16**	**11:00AM**
Mary Lou † & Ray Austria †		Olivia & Martin
Wed.	**December 17**	**11:00AM**
Crystal De Lacruz†		Family
Thur.	**December 18**	**9:00AM**
Theresa Jordin & Alice Martin		Olivia & Martin
Fri.	**December 19**	**11:00AM**
Rochelle Reyes		Mom & Dad
Sat.	**December 20**	**4:30PM**
Mark Meagher † (heavenly birthday)		Littleton-Jensen Family
Sun.	**December 21**	**9:00AM**
Justin Reyes† (heavenly birthday)		Mom & Dad
Port Costa		**11:00AM**
People of the Parish		

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