

# FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

## THE BUS TO EVIL?

*The other day as I was driving down Amboy Road, I spotted a bus with a sign on the front that was intriguing. The sign read "evil". Now I know most of the bus routes on the Island, but I don't think that "evil" is one of them! It reminds me of a story of a fiery preacher who was on a bus one day. Well, a drunk stumbled on the bus and flopped down on a seat. The preacher approached the man and said, "listen, don't you know you're headed for hell?" The drunk replied, "I'm on the wrong bus again!"*

*What I later discovered about the bus sign was that "evil" actually is the name of a new show to be premiering on CBS on September 26th. According to the show's website, "evil" is a program that brings together a skeptical psychologist, a priest and a carpenter - kind of an odd group. But they investigate supernatural mysteries, including the origins of evil. Sounds like an interesting show!*

*Most of us are aware that there is a great deal of evil in our world. We can think of 9/11, the recent mass shootings in our country, the scourge of drugs and the sexual abuse crisis within the church. As regards to the latter, I was reading Bishop Robert Barron's book, "Letter to a Suffering Church" which was made available to the parish last weekend. It is an excellent analysis of the crisis within the church.*

*While not discounting human responsibility, Bishop Barron places blame for evil on the devil. He writes: "The devil works typically through suggestion, insinuation, temptation and seduction. He is essentially powerless until he finds men and women who will cooperate with him." How true!*

*There is an expression that we are familiar with: "The devil made me do it!" That's false. The devil cannot force our hand against our free will. We have to directly choose evil. Because we are weak and wounded by original sin, temptation affects each and every one of us. However, we can resist temptation through prayer and the power of God's grace.*

*In this modern, supposedly sophisticated world in which we live, the devil is often consigned to the realm of fiction and fantasy. Just recently, the superior of the Jesuit order, Father Arturo Sosa Abascal stated that the devil is just a "symbolic figure" who really does not exist. It was once pointed out, however, that one of Satan's biggest tricks is to convince people that he is not real at all! When we assess the state of the world and our current messed up society, I think we can affirm that there must be some active agent of evil that fouls things up.*

*The abuse crisis within the church is a case in point. The devil has had a "field day" and by leading priests and consecrated religious to sin, he has effectively crippled the mission of the church regarding the salvation of souls. It was once said, "the corruption of the best is the worst."*

*Priests, brothers, sisters and other leaders are supposed to be the best. Once trust is broken, it is very hard to regain.*

*But each of us too, faces our own struggle against the devil. "The bus" to evil often stops at our front door, but we don't have to get on that bus even if a lot of other people are boarding! Through our Holy Communion, our prayer and avoiding the near occasions of sin, we can put the devil to flight. Armed with the grace of God, we can combat the wickedness and snares of the "evil one".*

*Sincerely in Christ,*

*Fr. Louis Jerome*