

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the Book of Prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 53:3-7)

He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces, He was despised, and we esteemed Him not. Surely He took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered Him stricken by God, smitten by Him, and afflicted. But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed.

We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet He did not open his mouth; He was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He did not open His mouth. The Word of the Lord. R. Thanks be to God.

Reflection ~ Divine Exchange

We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53:6). All of us have sinned and rebelled against God. God has laid on His beloved Son, Jesus, the punishment due to us all. Jesus stands in our shoes and takes the punishment on our behalf. Jesus lets Himself be wounded in His Body so that we can be healed of the wounds in our souls caused by our sins.

Every sin has a price. By His Wounds we have been healed (cf. Isaiah 53:5). When Jesus died on the Cross, He paid in full the price of our sins. All we need to do is to claim salvation in the Name of Jesus and follow His commands. He is truly the sacrificial Lamb of God that John the Baptist referred to, as Jesus walked by, saying, “*Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*” (cf John 1:29). In the past, the Jews offered up goats, sheep, bull or some suitable animal as sin offerings which could never take away sins nor make peace with God. But when Jesus died for us on the Cross, He become our perfect, living sacrifice fully acceptable to God, and which is continually being re-enacted and re-offered to God in the Holy Mass. The coming of Jesus as God’s Sacrificial Lamb was also hinted when Moses said, “*God Himself will provide the lamb*” (cf Genesis 22:8) in response to Isaac’s question of where the lamb for the offering was when both of them were on the mountain.

Jesus took the shame of our sins by enduring the shame of the Cross. In the days of the Old Testament, execution on a cross was the most shameful of all forms of death, reserved for the lowest class of criminals. The person to be executed was stripped of all his clothing and exposed naked to the gaze of passers-by who jeered and mocked. In Hebrews 12:2, it is written Jesus “*endured the cross, despising the shame.*”

He was despised and rejected by men (cf. Isaiah 53:3). Jesus suffered rejection that we maybe accepted by the Father. Throughout His earthly life, Jesus suffered from rejection from His chosen people. The rejection came to its most painful climax when full of pain and anguish, and weighed down with the sins of the world, Jesus experienced the most agonising rejection when His own Father looked away during the Crucifixion, while Jesus cried out in anguish, “*My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?*” (cf Mt 27:46, Psalm 22:1).

Jesus died that we might have eternal life. St. Paul explains this aspect of Divine Exchange clearly: The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord (cf. Romans 6:23).

Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, You could have chosen a less painful way to redeem me. But You did it the hard way to show to me beyond a shadow of doubt, how much You really love me. You did it through Your Pain, Your Sweat, Your Blood, Your Tears and Your most shameful Death on the Cross. Lord, I thank You that You were wounded that I maybe healed. I thank You that You died my death that I may share Your eternal life. I thank You that You endured my shame that I may share Your eternal glory in Heaven. I thank You that You suffered rejection that I might have Your acceptance with God, our Father. Precious Lord, You love me so much but I have loved You so little. I wish that my heart be set on fire with love for You as Yours is on fire with love for me. Mary, Protectress of the Faith, teach me how to love Jesus like You do. Thank You Jesus. Praise You Jesus.