

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the Gospel According to Matthew (*Matthew 11:25-26, 28-30*)

At that time Jesus said, "I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants. Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight." "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light. The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection – Jesus teaches us humility

You have hidden these from the wise and intelligent and revealed them to infants (cf Matthew 11:25). It is said that the furthest route to God is through the mind and intelligence, and the shortest one is through the heart. God treasures simplicity and humility because this reflects the image of His Son Jesus. A simple undivided heart that is full of love will be able to understand the Sacred Heart of Jesus more than an intelligent mind that can only relate to God through the intellect. That was why the learned Scribes and Pharisees made their biggest mistake in their lives by failing to recognize the long-awaited Messiah while the simple folks and fishermen were well ahead of them by becoming apostles in God's Kingdom on earth.

Learn from Me for I am gentle and humble in heart (cf Matthew 11:29). Jesus has many virtuous attributes, yet He singled out humility as something He wants us to learn from Him. Why is humility so important? Humility is the arch-enemy of pride which with its sister, inordinate self-love is the basis of all sins. A proud soul does not know its place with God. Such a one seeks to do things for the good and recognition that it will bring it without considering whether this is in God's will. She does not attribute to God her success in life but attributes them to her own hard work and qualities. A proud soul may pray but does not trust God when any persecution or trials come. She cannot see her own faults and is unable to look into her own heart. She may even consider herself "holy" and may perform many devotions but does not open her heart to real conversion. She pursues her own desires as the aim in life, thinking she is leading a good and holy life but without really trying to do God's will. That is why our Lord says, "*Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.*" (*Matthew 7:21*).

Holy love and holy humility are inseparable. Holy love in the heart impels a person to be humble. The depth of the love in the heart will determine the depth of humility. On this bedrock of the twin virtues rest all the other virtues. The other virtues cannot deepen without the presence of these two virtues in the heart. That is why our Lord goes to great lengths to teach us about love and humility when He walked the earth. He said, "*Many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first*" (*cf Matthew 19:30*). And being Lord of lords and King of kings and Son of Almighty God, Jesus taught us a profound example of humility by washing the feet of his apostles! How the angels in heaven must have prostrated themselves at the sight!

Immaculate Heart of Mary – the Most Humble of God's Creatures. "*He looks on His servant in Her lowliness, henceforth all ages will call Me blessed*" (*Luke 1:48*). Our Blessed Mother Mary in her Magnificat tells us that it was her humility that attracts God to Her. All of our Blessed Mother's thoughts, words and actions were all steeped in love and humility. Her response to Archangel Gabriel was "*I am the handmaid of the Lord. Be it done to Me according to your word*" (*Luke 1:38*). She did not think about how her "Yes" will bring difficulties to her quiet life but instead hurried away to visit her cousin Elizabeth.

The Crown of thorns. Our Lord Jesus did not merely show us compelling examples of humility by His behaviour but through His humiliation especially when crowned with a crown of thorns, mocked and jeered, He went to great lengths to atone for our pride and earn for us graces of humility. Because of what Jesus suffered in His humiliation, we are given His strength to rise above our self pride and disordered self love.

Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, help me to live more deeply in holy love and holy humility. Give me the grace and courage to look deep into my heart to see where I am failing in these virtues. I know it is only by practising these virtues and praying for them that I can deepen and perfect them. Mary, Protectress of the Faith, teach my love and humility. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.