

Scripture Reading - A Reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans (*Romans 13:12-14*)
Put on Christ

The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armour of light. Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature. The Word of the Lord. R. Thanks be to God.

Reflection – What Would Christ Do (WWCD)?

Putting on Christ as opposed to gratifying the desires of the sinful nature. What is meant by clothing myself with Christ? I am not called to replicate the deeds of Christ. My life circumstances and that of Christ when He was on earth are different. Rather, I am to ask myself “what would Christ do” (WWCD) if He were in my shoes, in my life situation. For example, how would Christ respond to my colleague who is not pulling his weight in team work? Christ came and gave us the Commandments on love and went on to act out the Commandments by the way He lived and died. He is my ideal model on how to live and love as a Christian.

Through St. Paul, God commands me to imitate Christ. If I love Christ and want to be with Him, I have no other way but to imitate Him. For He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. What are the practical implications of this command? Firstly, I have to put away my selfish nature. I have to put all my desires, dreams and aspirations into the hands of Jesus. I need to surrender all of them. Christ never seeks self-gratification. In the Garden of Gethsemane, while sweating blood in agony, Christ prayed to God, the Father, “...yet, not My will but Yours be done.” (Luke 22:42). When His disciples urged Him to eat, Jesus said, “My food is to do the will of the One who sent me and to finish His work.” (John 4:34). Jesus lives to do the Will of His Father! So should I if I want to imitate Him!

Secondly, imitation of Christ implies living for the same purpose for which Christ lives. Christ’s entire life on earth and mission revolve around bringing about the highest well-being of His people (eternal salvation) and thus, giving glory to God. Thirdly, imitation of Christ implies a single-mindedness exclusively directed to this one, lofty, noble purpose.*zeal for your house consumes me...* (cf John 2:17, Psalm 69.9).

Is imitation of Christ possible? God never commands His people to do the impossible. Whenever He issues a command, He provides the grace to carry it out. *I can do all things through the One who empowers me within.* (Philippians 4:13). Through God’s grace I can do all things that God wants me to do. Imitation of Christ will not happen by accident. Unless intended by unshakeable conviction of decision, it will not happen. I need to decide for myself. It is really all up to me. It is my life-changing decision.

Conditions for Obedience to this Command. An actor before acting out the role in which she/he is supposed to portray a particular person, will spend much time studying the personality, character and even minor, trivial mannerisms of that person. To imitate Christ, I need to be rooted in Holy Scripture – the Word of God. Through Scripture, I study the laws and precepts of God which will enable me to walk in the ways of Christ. Through Scripture I study and meditate Christ’s life and passion and I gain an insight into His person, His personality, His character, His virtues and the divine love in His Sacred Heart. Once I make His grand aim and purpose my own, His laws and precepts the guiding principle in my own life and imitate His virtues in my thoughts, words and actions, I am more likely to do what Christ would have done in the same circumstances of my life.

At the same time, I am to rid from my heart all sinful habits, resentments, unforgiveness and unrepented sins that prevent me from being able to receive the graces God wants to shower on me. True love is sacrificial as Christ has demonstrated. I am to be prepared to make big and small sacrifices in imitating Christ. I am to place all my trust in God and not to depend solely on myself for then I would not feel the need to put on Christ.

Conversation with Our Lord

Precious Lord, You have shown me how to live my life, a life that should reflect Yours. Your suffering and Passion taught me how I should love. You said I should even lay down my life for my brethren. I would like to walk in Your ways. Put Your precepts into my heart. Flood my mind with Your divine light and help me cast out all that opposes holy truth. Give me understanding, knowledge and wisdom. Give me a great love for Your Word in Holy Scripture so that I may know You more and more each day. Teach me how to imitate You in my life. I want to be able to say together with St. Paul, “It is not I but Christ who lives in me.” O Mary conceived without sin, pray for me. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.

...and we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. (1 John 3:16)