

## Scripture Reading - A Reading from the Gospel According to John (John 15:18-21)

*No slave is greater than his Master*

Jesus said to His disciples, "If you find that the world hates you, know it has hated Me before you. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own; the reason it hates you is that you do not belong to the world. But I chose you out of the world. Remember what I told you: no slave is greater than his master. They will persecute you as they persecuted Me. If they obeyed My teaching, they will obey yours too. All this they will do to you because of My name, for they know nothing of Him who sent Me. The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

### Reflection – Do I identify myself as the Lord's servant?

*Christ came not to be served but to serve.* As Christ is the servant of God, and came to serve, so too do I cling to my identity of being the servant of Christ. My first duty in life is to serve and obey God. My duty of gratitude can never be exhausted for He gives me so many gifts, most important of which is the gift of Himself and His Blessed Mother. As a follower of Christ, I walk in His footsteps, and He calls me to serve with love. By love, the Lord says the others around me will know that I am His disciple, His servant.

*A good servant of the Lord aims only to please God and to do His will.* As such, these will be my guiding principles:

- When I have sincerely done my best and my task does not appear to be successful, I will remain tranquil as the outcome belongs to God. God alone can will any outcome.
- I will rejoice in the good done by others as if it had been done by myself as my chief concern is the glory of God and His will being carried out.
- In sincere humility, I will try to do my best in whatever task I am called to do by the need of the situation, rather than becoming discontented and to seek for another more 'suitable.'
- I will not seek recognition or appreciation by those around but be satisfied that I am serving God.
- I will not remain attached to my task and am able to leave it at moment's notice into the care of another when called upon to do something new.

*I am the vine, you are the branches. If a man remains in Me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing* (John 15:5). I know that only when I am united with Christ can I be truly fruitful in God's eyes. Productivity as measured by God is vastly different from the economic yardstick of monetary success recognised by the secular world. To be truly fruitful, I need to identify myself with Christ and everything He stands for: His Desires, His Mission, His Ministry. Christ is my beginning and my end and everything in between. Like St. John the Baptist, I must strive for Christ to increase in me and I to decrease so that I can say together with St. Paul, "*It is not I but Christ who lives in me.*" (cf Galatians 2:20).

*Jesus, the carpenter's assistant.* Do I find myself in a situation where I feel my gifts and talents are not fully utilised but where I am, nevertheless, called to serve? I should feel comforted that Jesus, the Son of God, was called by His Father to be a humble carpenter in Nazareth before His public ministry. I know that my patient obedience and trust in God in a given situation is more important to God than whether there is a perceived good fit between my God-given gifts/skills and the task I am called to do. *For My thoughts are not your thoughts. Neither are your ways My ways, declares the Lord.* (Isaiah 55:8).

*Lest the servant of the Lord grows proud.* The Lord does not need me to make things happen. *No more does He receive man's service as if He were in need of it...* (cf Acts 17:25). God is almighty and can, in a blink of an eye, if He wants to, cause all things to fall into line with His divine will. It is true that whatever good I do comes from God and without His grace, I cannot even pronounce His Name. Nevertheless, He loves me and wants me to partake in His loving plan of salvation, to do my unique part for Him, to prove myself worthy of being called His Child and to share His eternal glory.

### Conversation with Our Lord

Precious Lord, thank You for the gift of the work You have called me to do. Let me be sanctified by my work. Grant that my work be a fruit of my love for You. I have been called to bear fruits that will last for eternity. Lord You are the Vine, let me be Your branch. Prune me whenever my branch is not fruitful. Help me to remember always that I am Your servant. Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for me. Thank You Jesus. Praise You Jesus.