

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the Gospel according to Matthew (Matthew 11:25)

At that time Jesus said in reply, "I give praise to You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although You have hidden these things from the wise and the learned You have revealed them to the childlike." The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection – A simple heart attracts God's favour and is a great instrument in His hands

God has immense blessings and rewards for those who are childlike and simple-hearted. *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:3); blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land (Matthew 5:5); blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God (Matthew 5:8).* Not only does God reveal His mysteries and His ways to the simple and childlike but also makes them His great instruments to build up His Kingdom on earth.

A simple heart has unquestionable faith and trust in God. When God called Abraham, he was already seventy-five years old, hardly a young man with a keen sense of adventure. To respond to God's calling, Abraham had to uproot himself, his family, his possessions, and his security to go away to a distant place with which he was not familiar. In faith, Abraham obeyed God's calling without knowing where he was going. Further down the road, God had another great test for Abraham. When Abraham was asked by God to sacrifice Isaac, his only son on the mountain, he prepared everything to carry out God's wish, secure in his thinking that God had the power to raise Isaac from the dead if He so wishes. Abraham knew his place before God, his role is to obey God and not question God's intentions or ways. As a result, Abraham became the father of all who believe in Christ. Through faith, we stand to inherit all the promises God made to Abraham (cf. Romans 4:16).

A simple heart carries out God's commands without the fear of human opinion. When the moment came to announce the great, momentous event of the birth of the Son of the Most High, God chose not the highly respected religious elders nor the chief priests but the lowly and poor shepherds whose existence was of no account to their society. The shepherds led such a hard life that even on cold nights they were out in the fields watching their flock. Who would entrust such rough and lowly people to announce an important message? Only God would. And the shepherds did not disappoint. They hurried to pay homage to the newborn King and then spread the good news of what the angels told them about the new Messiah to everyone they came across.

A simple heart lives only for the Kingdom of God. When the time came for choosing witnesses for the ceremony of the presentation of His infant Son in the temple, God again made surprising choices. The two witnesses at the consecration of Infant Jesus at the temple were two poor, elderly insignificant people: Simeon and Anna. Both were patiently awaiting the arrival of the Messiah. Simeon was so favoured by God that he was given the promise that he would see the Messiah before he died. Anna was among the blessed few who were paving the way for the coming of the Messiah. *She never left the temple but worshipped night and day, fasting and praying (Luke 2:37).*

A simple heart is obedient to God unto death. Jesus exhorts us to imitate His heart: *learn from Me, for I am meek and humble of heart (Matthew 11:29).* Jesus shows us how to be obedient to the Heavenly Father. He emptied Himself of all glory due to Him as Son of the Most High and took the form of humanity so that He can suffer and die for the sake of God's Kingdom. Jesus's fiat to the Father's will was echoed by our Blessed Mother who said to Angel Gabriel at the Annunciation: *Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." (Luke 1:38).*

Conversation with Jesus: Precious Lord, You said: *unless you turn and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 18:3).* You want me to pattern my heart like Yours. You teach me how to live and love by Your life during Your time on earth. A prideful heart has no time or space for God in its life. Simplify my heart. Help me remove all unholy attachments. Help me rise above all earthly concerns and set my sight on everlasting things worth striving for – treasures that do not rust or can be stolen. Purify my heart of all hatred, grudges, hurts and woundedness so that it is free to offer You all its love. Let Your Spirit ignite my heart and set it on fire with love for You. Mary, Mother of Salvation, take my heart consecrated to You and mold it to be like Yours so that I can love God with Your perfect love. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.