

## Scripture Reading

### A Reading from the Gospel according to John (John 12:26)

Whoever serves Me must follow Me, and where I am, there also will My servant be. The Father will honor whoever serves Me. The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

## Reflection – To love is to serve

**The most important job in the world.** When the beloved, only begotten Son of the Most High was born incarnate into our human world, God gave the responsibility of taking care of His infant Son to Mary and Joseph. Jesus was to remain in the motherly care of Mary for thirty years before He started His public ministry. Jesus lived a hidden life before His public ministry. In this hidden life, Jesus serves His Father by living in filial obedience to Mary, His Mother and Joseph, His foster Father. Through His submission in filial obedience to Mary and Joseph, Jesus serves and glorifies His Heavenly Father more than if He had performed the most stupendous miracles and signs in public. For Jesus, His food is to carry out the will of the Heavenly Father (cf. John 4:34). Even as a young boy at age of 12, Jesus showed clearly to Mary and Joseph where His allegiance lies when He calmly remained in His “Father’s house” when Mary and Joseph were frantically looking for Him (cf. Luke 2:49). What are the qualities of Mary and Joseph that made God choose them as mother and foster father for Jesus?

**What is important in people’s eyes may not be so in God’s eye.** Mary and Joseph were nobody of importance in their society. Though the family is of noble lineage, they were not rich nor did they hold any position of importance in their Jewish community. But clearly we see that God trusted them to a very high degree. And God was not wrong in His choice. When Mary was requested by Archangel Gabriel to be the mother of the Saviour, Mary could only say “yes” if her love for God is greater than love for her personal safety as in those days unwed mothers could be stoned to death. And Mary did say “yes”. Joseph had the heavy responsibility of looking after Jesus and Mary. His unquestioning obedience to God in taking the pregnant Mary to be his wife and fleeing in haste with his little family to Egypt is a solid proof of Joseph’s ardent love for God.

**Age is of no issue to God. God uses people society considered past their prime.** When the time came for the Baby Jesus to be presented to God in the temple in Jerusalem, among the many in the Temple, God chose two elderly persons to be the key witnesses to His Infant Son’s consecration: elderly Simeon and the old woman, Anna. Scripture says of Simeon: *This man was righteous and devout, awaiting the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him (Luke 2:25)*. And of Anna: *She never left the temple, but worshipped night and day with fasting and prayer (Luke: 2:37)*. The character of these two persons are such that although they were elderly, they did not allow themselves to be distracted by or concerned about their lack of physical strength or be tempted with preoccupation of the material concerns of their world but kept the fire of the Holy Spirit in their souls burning brightly and undimmed despite their old age. Age is of no issue to God. He works mightily on the young as well. St Dominic Savio, at 15 was among the youngest saints. St Dominic Savio said: *“I am not capable of doing big things, but I want to do everything, even the smallest things, for the greater glory of God.”*

***If anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, or straw, the work of each will come to light, for the Day will disclose it. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each one’s work (1 Corinthians 3:12-13)***. Every person is given talents and gifts from the bounty of God for building up God’s Kingdom. He or she can decide to use these gifts either for the pleasure and glorification of self or for the greater glory of God. On the day of judgement, all the works that are not treasured by God will be consumed by the divine fire, and nothing will be left for all the time and energy spent on it. God is not impressed with successes and achievements motivated by self-glorification but exhorts us not to work for food that perishes but for food that endures to eternal life (cf. John 6:27).

**Conversation with Jesus:** Precious Lord, to love is to serve. Infuse in my ungrateful soul an ardent love for You and all that You represent, and a deep and abiding desire to serve You every day of my life. How can work for You be painful or burdensome when You give reward even for a cup of cold water given out of love (cf. Matthew 10:42)? The criteria You use to judge my work is love. You said that whatever I do to others, I do it to You (cf. Matthew 25:40). Let all my work be carried out in loving service of You even though I am working for people. Let all my thoughts, words and actions be motivated by love and truth so that I can build upon Your foundation with gold, silver and precious stones that will stand the test of divine firing, and thus, return glory to You. I trust in You completely. Put Your yoke upon my shoulders and show me how by walking in Your footsteps, I can render glory to God. Mary, Mother of Salvation, make me a loving servant of God. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.