

Scripture Reading

A Reading of the Gospel According to Luke (Luke 23:43)

Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with Me in paradise." The Gospel of the Lord.
R. Praise to You Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection – Ascend to Your Calvary

Calvary - the summit of our faith in and love for God. On Calvary, Jesus conquered the devil, the flesh and the world on our behalf. Thus, Jesus was immediately able to apply the fruits of redemption to the good thief, Dismus, saying to him "today you will be with Me in paradise." Through his repentance and trust in God in the midst of the surrounding voices of mockery and rejection, Dismus ascended Calvary together with Jesus and gained the crown of life. Am I ready to ascend Calvary together with Jesus and hear Him say to me "today you will be with Me in Paradise?" when I reach the top?

Defeat of Satan. Satan is defeated when we accept Jesus Christ as our personal Lord and Saviour and trust in Him totally. *They triumphed over him (Satan) by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death (Revelation 12:11).* Satan is defeated through the blood of Jesus on the Cross freeing us from the wages of sin which is death (cf. Romans 6:23). Additionally the death of Jesus on the Cross empowers us to live a new life in His righteousness. The kingdom of Satan is further defeated by the followers of Christ giving witness to the great love God has for His people as proven by Jesus' death on the Cross. The effectiveness of the action of these witnesses is further enhanced by their total trust in God in giving their lives fully to God and not fearing any consequences from this decision. *If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord (Romans 14:8).*

Defeat of the world. The world offers strong allurements for many people especially those whose hearts are not solidly rooted in God. The world promotes a culture of self-interest, individualism, humanism, survival of the fittest, success as measured by material riches. Living life fully is interpreted as indulging oneself to the fullest. Life is no longer held as sacred but comfort and convenience in life becomes an end in itself. In response to the world St Paul says: *What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ (Philippians 3:8).* Am I able to resist the calling of the world to make more money, to acquire more material goods that make me look good in the eyes of others? Am I able to resist those activities that make me more acceptable to my worldly friends? Can I let go of those friends whose company drive me further and further away from God? Can I detach myself from my money and use the excess to help those in need?

Defeat of the flesh (self). The greatest of the three enemies of the soul is self (pride). Pride weakens the armour of the soul from attacks by the evil one. Through working on its pride, the devil is able to deceive the soul into believing all the things she/he is not. It is difficult for a proud soul to submit to God or to anyone. Pride puts oneself first and its desires are geared towards satisfaction of self. Through pride all virtues of the soul are weakened and compromised. The heart suffers through unwillingness to forgive and harbouring of grudges. Conquering of self is a lifelong process. It is the daily battle of every true follower of Christ. Without grace from God, it is an insurmountable task. Jesus came to show us how to be humble. He divested Himself of all His heavenly glory to undertake the mission of salvation of the world through His own suffering, humiliation, blood, sweat and tears.

Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, thank You for ascending Calvary to conquer the devil, the flesh and the world on my behalf. In achieving this, You make me more than a conqueror (cf. Romans 8:37). Through Your Cross on Calvary You have won graces for me to ascend my own Calvary. Help me empty myself just as You have done when You were born incarnate as a baby into our world. Keep my heart humble and cast out from my heart all deception and anything which opposes holy truth. Everyday I seek Your grace to help me forgive completely anyone who has offended me so that no grudges remain in my heart. Help me empty my heart of myself so that I can reflect You more fully to others to give a better witness. Let me keep trusting You no matter what happens to me. Mary, Protectress of the Faith, form my heart to be like Yours. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.