

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the Book of Genesis (*Genesis 3:14-15*)

Then the LORD God said to the snake: Because you have done this, cursed are you among all the animals, tame or wild. On your belly you shall crawl, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers. They will strike at your head, while you strike at their heel. The Word of the Lord. R. Thanks be to God.

Reflection - The unique role of Blessed Virgin Mary in God's Plan of Salvation

Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word (Luke 1:38). Only Mary is strong and pure enough to be the Mother of the Messiah. At the Annunciation, when Archangel Gabriel greeted Mary with "*Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you*" (Luke 1:28), Mary was troubled at the meaning of the angel's greeting. The greeting tells us that Mary enjoys God's favour and His near Presence. It is a very high compliment one can receive from another. When the angel told her that she had been chosen by God to be the Mother of the Messiah, Mary's only concern was that she was a virgin. However, she immediately said "yes" when the angel explained that the Holy Spirit would overshadow her so that she would conceive Jesus, the only begotten Son of God. Mary had no fear of being an unwed mother who in those days faced the certainty of being stoned to death if it was discovered. By her action, Mary manifested great obedience, selflessness and courage in doing what God asked of her. Mary knew her simplicity and profound humility drew the favour of God. *For He has looked upon His handmaid's lowliness; behold, from now on will all ages call me blessed (Luke 1:48).*

I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers. They will strike at your head, while you strike at Their heel (Genesis 3:15). Even before Mary was born, God pronounced Jesus and Mary as the weapons He would use to defeat evil. No other creature of God was given as much divine power as Mary to defeat evil. Thus, the role of Mary goes well beyond being the living tabernacle of Christ in bringing forth Christ into our world as a little human baby. Mary has been given great power from God to protect us, her children and help us overcome evil, preparing us fit for heaven. During an exorcism, the late Father Gabriel Amorth, the Vatican exorcist, remembered, "Satan told me, through the possessed person, 'Every Hail Mary of the Rosary is a blow to the head for me; if Christians knew the power of the Rosary, it would be the end of me!'" Such is the power of our Blessed Mother in combatting evil! In His great wisdom, God chose Mary, His most obedient, simplest and humblest of all His creatures to help defeat Satan, the most rebellious and proudest of all His creatures.

Then He said to the disciple, "Behold, your Mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home (John 19:27). Before Jesus died, He gifted mankind with the precious gift of His Mother, Mary. St John received this priceless gift on behalf of all of us. And what a mother! We have no hesitation in turning to Mary because she is our spiritual mother. Though our eternal salvation remains her highest priority, like any good mother, Mary is also deeply concerned about our material well-being. Because she is very close to God, great is her power of intercession for the needs of her children. It was St Louis Marie de Monfort who said that Mary's intercession to her Son is greater than that of the whole heavenly court which includes all the saints, martyrs and Apostles! What a powerful advocate and intercessor we have in our Blessed Mother! In the Gospel according to St John, we note that the first miracle of Jesus was at the request of our Blessed Mother who interceded for the wedding couple who ran short of wine for the wedding guests. By this, Jesus emphasizes the importance of Mary's intercession and gives us encouragement and confidence in turning to Mary for whatever problem that we may have.

Conversation with Jesus and Mary: Precious Lord, thank You for the beautiful gift of Your Mother, Mary. Give us a lively devotion to Mary so that we can render her the honour that is due to her and enjoy her care and protection. Devotion to our Blessed Mother and imitation of her virtues is our shortcut to Your Sacred Heart. May all of God's children be inspired to imitate the sterling virtues of our Blessed Mother, particularly her steadfast faith in God, her prompt obedience to God's will, her simplicity and deep humility. Mary, you who are full of grace, and dispense the divine graces as you see fit in accordance with God's will, grant us the greatest of graces: love of and surrender to God's will so that together with you, we may render God the greatest possible glory! Mary, as you paved the way for Christ's First Coming, you will likewise pave the way for Christ's Second Coming through the triumph of your Immaculate Heart! Mary, Protectress of our Faith, keep us safe in your Immaculate Heart as we consecrate ourselves to you. May we through your protection, care and intercession live a life of grace on earth and arrive safely at the end of our earthly pilgrimage at the gates of heaven where our glorious, eternal inheritance awaits us. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus. www.twohearts.hk