

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the Gospel according to Luke (Luke 23:33-34)

When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified Him and the criminals there, one on His right, the other on His left. Then Jesus said, "**Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.**" They divided His garments by casting lots. The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection – Making reparation to the Heart of God by bringing His compassion to others

Forgiving those who hurt or offended us. Everyone stands so much in need of forgiveness from God. *All have sinned and are deprived of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).* Every person with the exception of our Blessed Mother Mary has sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. As we stand so much in need of God's forgiveness, we should not withhold forgiveness to those who offended or hurt us no matter how deeply. Jesus teaches us very clearly: *If you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions (Matthew 6:14-15).* God is holy and just. How can we hope to receive forgiveness from Him if we refuse to forgive those who hurt us? And where would we be without God's forgiveness? Without God's forgiveness, no amount of prayers or sacrifices is going to do us any good. When we harden our hearts in unforgiveness, we close it to receiving God's graces and love.

Forgiving ourselves is just as important as forgiving others. When Judas Iscariot realized the gravity of his act of betrayal to Jesus, he deeply regretted what he had done. However, there was no real repentance on the part of Judas. He was focused on himself, was filled with horror at the result of his action and had forgotten the mercy of God. As a result, Judas Iscariot cannot forgive himself and hung himself in despair. Even though he was close to God as an apostle of Jesus Christ, God was not the focus and motivation of his heart and mind. Despite the closeness to Christ, Judas allowed selfishness to rule his heart. When the time of need came, his hardened heart cannot receive the grace to repent and to forgive himself. Once we have sincerely repented of our sins, God wants us to forgive ourselves and to move on with the present. *Remember not the events of the past, the things of long ago consider not. See, I am doing something new! Now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? In the wilderness I make a way, in the wasteland, rivers (Isaiah 43:18-19).* God wants us to live in the present moment.

Detesting the sin but loving the sinner. God detests sin but loves the sinner. We can practise charity by not judging others. The weak human mind has a sinful inclination to be judgmental of others, and thus, need to be subjected to holy discipline. We are always so quick to offer our human opinion which can bring down others. Oftentimes a fault we can recognize and criticize in others is also present in us though we might not be aware of it. Usually this is a result of the double standards we use in applying to ourselves and others. Jesus gives us a good lesson: *Why do you notice the splinter in your brother's eye, but do not perceive the wooden beam in your own eye? (Matthew 7:3).* We are never called to condone or trivialize sin but we are called to be merciful to the sinner as we are all sinners. Putting a stop to all judgmental thoughts and words, and purifying our mind as often as needed during the day is a good act of compassion to others and ourselves, making reparation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, so much offended by our ingratitude and iniquities.

Putting on the heart and mind of Christ (cf. Philippians 2:5). *Do nothing out of selfishness or out of vainglory; rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourselves, each looking out not for his own interests, but also everyone for those of others (Philippians 2:3-4).* Christ teaches us a profound lesson in His time on earth. Though He is Son of the Most High, and equal with God His Father, Jesus did not cling on to His right but instead willingly obeyed the decree of His Father to take lowly human flesh to be born into poverty and lowly human parents. He is obedient to God the Father even unto His death which He willingly offered as a perfect, once-and-for-all Sacrifice for every sinner on the face of the earth. Through His obedience to the Father, Jesus won for us every grace we need to overcome ourselves in order to show compassion to others.

Conversation with Jesus: Precious Lord, when dying on the Cross You said: "*Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.*" Through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer to You my life and all my sufferings for the forgiveness of all sins especially my own. Help us make reparation to Your wounded Heart by bringing Your love and compassion to others. Enable us put on Your mind and heart so that we can forgive others, refrain from being judgmental, but to see and respond to the plight of others and most of all, to share Your ardent desire to save souls. In love for You, we offer prayers and sacrifices on behalf of lost souls so that more souls can be drawn closer to You. In this way, we will assuage the burning thirst in Your Heart. Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for us. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus. www.twohearts.hk