

Scripture Reading

A Reading of the Gospel According to Luke (*Luke 23:32-35*)

Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with Him to be executed. When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified Him there, along with the criminals - one on His right, the other on His left. Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they divided up His clothes by casting lots. The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at Him. They said, "He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is God's Messiah, the Chosen One." The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection – Be a prayer warrior and a victim of love

Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." (Luke 23:34). Jesus is a victim of love for our sakes. It is hard to walk in the footsteps of Jesus unless we understand His motives and make them ours. Jesus is led only by Divine Love and Divine Will. God is love (cf. 1 John 4:8) and Jesus is the personification of Divine Love. Because of this inimitable love for His Heavenly Father, Jesus lives to do the will of His Father. Jesus said to His disciples, "My food is to do the Will of the Father who sent Me and to complete His Work." (cf. John 4:34). Everything for Jesus flows out of great love for His Father and His Father's Divine Will. His Father's divine love for each of us becomes Christ's personal love for each of us. His Father's Divine Will becomes Christ's personal will for all His actions. Having perfect love for His Father and being completely docile to His Will, Jesus can say with all truth, "My Father and I are one." (cf. John 10:30). Thus, by His own shining example, Jesus can teach with great authority, "If you love Me, keep My commands." (cf. John 14:15).

Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed (cf. Luke 5:16). Jesus is a man of prayer. On the Cross He capped His whole earthly life of sacrifice with a plea to His Father for forgiveness for humanity and a surrender to His Will (cf. Luke 23:46). Jesus knows how to keep Himself closely united with the Father. Through His example Jesus teaches His disciples the importance of prayer. Jesus has done many things with His disciples but we note that the one thing which His disciples asked Him to teach was how to pray (cf. Luke 11:1). Jesus further demonstrates the importance of prayer when His disciples could not cast out a deaf and mute spirit from a boy by telling them that those kind of evil spirits can only be cast out by prayer and fasting (cf. Mark 9:29).

If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also.. (Luke 6:29). Jesus is a victim of love. Only Jesus is able to teach such doctrine without hypocrisy. Only Jesus is able to teach such self-forgetfulness in the face of persecution for the sake of love. Jesus is able to teach this doctrine with authority because He knows for each present moment of each situation He supplies the necessary graces to enable the carrying out of His command which seems humanly impossible (cf. Philippians 4:13). Jesus came to show us how we should love. *This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters (1 John 3:16).*

But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities....and by His wounds we are healed (Isaiah 53:5). Jesus heals us through His own wounds, His own pains, His own sufferings, His own agony, His own anguish. He did it to show us the value of human weakness and sufferings when united to His. He did it to help us understand His great love for us. He did it to show us the way to walk in imitation of His footsteps. He did it to break the hardness of our hearts. He did it so that we could be with Him in eternity. Was there ever a greater teacher? Was there ever a greater love?

Conversation with Jesus

Blessed Saviour, I am sorry for all my sins and the sins that humanity committed against Your love. I wish that I can take out all the thorns in Your Sacred Heart and console You. I offer You my heart to be united to Your Agonising Heart as a co-bearer of Your agony. Help me guard the sacred sanctuary of Your presence in my soul by a sincere prayer life and to manifest Your unconditional love always and never to retaliate in the face of persecution. In this aching world with so much conflict, turmoil and godlessness, I know You really need my prayers and the faithful manifestation of Your love to those around me. Mary, Protectress of the Faith, help me be a prayer warrior armed with Jesus' love. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.