

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the Book of Prophet Isaiah (*Isaiah 9:5-6*)

For a Child is born to us, a Son is given to us; upon His shoulder dominion rests. They name Him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace. His dominion is vast and forever peaceful, upon David's throne, and over His kingdom, which He confirms and sustains by judgment and justice, both now and forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this! The Word of the Lord. R. Thanks be to God.

Reflection ~ All thanksgiving to the Heavenly Father for the gift of His Son, Jesus

God the Father allows His divine Son to assume human flesh. The love of God for His human children as manifested in the Incarnation of Jesus Christ is the greatest love story ever enacted in all eternity. *And the Word became Flesh and made His dwelling among us, and we saw His glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth (John 1:14).* This act of love can never be imitated by the followers of Christ walking in His footsteps. It is an untold immense sacrifice of self when the divine willingly condescends to assume human flesh and frailty. The ordinary human intellect would never be able to understand the depth of this great sacrifice God made for us through His Son, Jesus. The only reason Jesus assumed human flesh is to have a human body to sustain suffering and death and to have His Blood shed in atonement for all the sins of mankind in accordance with the dictates of God's justice and will. *For it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats take away sins. For this reason, when He came into the world, He said: "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a Body You prepared for Me (Hebrews 10:4-5).*

God the Father allows His Son to be born into lowliness and poverty. Jesus, the beloved and only Son of the Most High God was born incarnate as a human baby in a lowly stable with only the animals to keep Him company. No kingly palace. No myriads of attendants. Not even a simple bed in the bitter cold winter. God made a strong identification with the poor in the condition into which Baby Jesus was born. Later on, Jesus would proclaim: *Blessed are you who are poor, for the kingdom of God is yours (Luke 6:20).* Jesus teaches the blessedness of being poor and the necessity of depending on God for the needs of daily life. A life of plenty and comfort will take away the need to depend on God for the important things in life and divert the focus away from God and His Providence. Thus, poverty in spirit is needed for those who are living in comfort and plenty so that the truth that God is the provider of all the things we need and have is never forgotten.

God the Father allows His Son to spend 30 years of His life in labour and obscurity. No high flying career for the Son of God, Who is the Temple of Divine Wisdom and the Tabernacle of Divine Knowledge. Jesus was not a doctor of the law, nor a religious leader of any sort. He quietly helped His foster Father, St Joseph in carpentry work. Jesus spent a large portion of His life living with His human parents and submitting to them in filial obedience. He was not out in the public area performing stunning miracles. Thus, Jesus glorified God the Father not by performing impressive miracles but by living in hiddenness and submitting to obedience to Mary and Joseph, making up for the disobedience of God's children, during the first 30 years of His earthly life.

God the Father allows His Son to die a publicly shameful death reserved for the worst of criminals. Crucifixion was the severest punishment meted to the worst of criminals at that time, so that they will die a slow and agonizing death in public humiliation. God the Father allows Jesus to die such an ignominious death in order to overcome the last enemy – eternal death. *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6:23).*

Conversation with Our Heavenly Father: Precious Heavenly Father, to save all of us You did not hesitate to send Your only begotten Son, Jesus to be born into our world in order to shed His blood as the perfect atonement for all our sins. Jesus said: *The Father and I are one (John 10:30).* Whatever Jesus feels whether it be joy or sorrow, pleasure or pain, You feel it to the same degree as Him, so perfect is Your unity and love for Each Other. When You sent Jesus into our world, it was an untold sacrifice on Your part, a sacrifice that would cause You tremendous pain and suffering. In doing so, You demonstrated beyond a shadow of doubt how much You love us though we really do not deserve it. Open the eyes of our heart to see the truth and depth of Your love and enlighten our mind to the indestructible hope to which we are called. Embrace all of us close to Your heart. Help us feel the love Your Heart holds for us so that our love for You is ignited. Through the Passion of Jesus Christ, give to all Your children the grace to love You as You love us. In the Name of Jesus we pray. Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for us. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.