

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the Gospel according to Luke (*Luke 1:38*)

Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her. The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection - To serve God we need to love God, to love God we need to know God

Love of God puts us ready at the service of God. We serve those whom we love. If we do not have love of God in our hearts, we will probably end up serving ourselves primarily. Our little world would revolve around ourselves, making ourselves little gods. This is the main source of the problems of the world today as widespread rejection of and indifference to the existence of God and His laws resulted in every kind of evil and sin when the unruly human passions are given free reign. For those who have love in their hearts for God, Jesus and Mary are sterling examples on how to serve God. When Archangel Gabriel approached Mary to request her to be the Mother of the Saviour, Mary gave the perfect, unconditional and confident answer: I am the servant of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word (cf. Luke 1:38). Mary said "yes" to God knowing fully the implications that would follow. Human wisdom would discourage one from becoming an unwed mother in those days when punishment of adultery is meted out to the woman involved by stoning her to death.

To know God, we need to study, assimilate and live His Word. All that God wants us to know about Him can be found in the holy Bible, the written Word of God. Through the Bible, God tells us how much He loves us. He proved it by sending His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ as the perfect sacrifice for our sins, shedding His Blood on the Cross so that we can be sanctified to stand before Him. His Word teaches us how to behave in our life so that we can attain the glorious eternal inheritance that God has planned for us. God's will is embedded in His Word. *Your Word is truth (John 17:17)*. God's truths can be found in the Bible. Though we may not be given a full understanding of the Bible, every word in the Bible is true. *The grass withers, the flower wilts, but the Word of our God stands forever (Isaiah 40:8)*. **We can have absolute trust and confidence in God's Word because God tells us that it is true and stands forever whether or not man believes in it.** The Bible is not a collection of stories as some people of little faith claimed because they do not understand nor accept what is written. *For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, My thoughts higher than your thoughts (Isaiah 55:8-9)*. **The correct attitude towards God's Word is reverence and obedience.** *This is the one whom I approve: the afflicted one, crushed in spirit, who trembles at My Word (Isaiah 66:2)*.

To have a deeper insight into God's love we need to pray and meditate on the sorrowful Passion of our Lord. Jesus tells us that there is no greater love than to die for another. *No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends (John 15:13)*. Through Jesus Christ, God has proven beyond a shadow of doubt His unconditional love for us. *In this is love: not that we have loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as expiation for our sins (1 John 4:10)*. There is strength and light in the Passion of Christ. When we prayerfully meditate on Christ's passion, especially through the Immaculate Heart of Mary which we can do through the sorrowful mysteries of the rosary, we unite ourselves to the lives of Jesus and Mary and participate in Christ's Passion. In the process, our hearts and minds are opened to be transformed by God's graces. God has allowed Jesus to endure the greatest degree of human suffering, and meditation of Christ's Passion brings us great graces.

God reveals Himself to the meek, humble and obedient (cf. Matthew 11:25, John 14:23). We know God only as much as God reveals Himself to us. As God is our loving Heavenly Father we have no doubt that He wants every one of His children to truly know Him, to understand His love for us and to know His ways so that everyone can walk on the true path. However, God's graces lavished on His children go wasted and bear no fruit when the hearts of His children are closed and not receptive to the sanctifying action of the Holy Spirit in their souls. How can God draw closer to us if we make no attempt to draw close to Him?

Conversation with Jesus: Precious Lord, You love and serve the Heavenly Father selflessly even to death. Let Your example be the inspiration of my life: to love God ardently and to serve Him with Your love and zeal. You command me to love God with all my heart, all my mind, all my soul and with all my strength. To do this is to be my true self in which I am created in God's righteousness and in His image. Cleanse my soul of all sins. Take away my indifference, my apathy, my lukewarmness, my brokenness, my weaknesses. Open my heart to receive a fullness of Your love and let my love for You be ignited. Implant in my heart a deep and abiding desire to serve You in all that I think, say and do. Mother of Salvation, pray for me. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus. www.twohearts.hk