

## Scripture Reading

### A Reading from the Letter of St Paul to the Ephesians (*Ephesians 6:10-13*)

Finally, draw your strength from the Lord and from His mighty power. Put on the armor of God so that you may be able to stand firm against the tactics of the devil. For our struggle is not with flesh and blood but with the principalities, with the powers, with the world rulers of this present darkness, with the evil spirits in the heavens. Therefore, put on the armor of God, that you may be able to resist on the evil day and, having done everything, to hold your ground. The Word of the Lord. R. Thanks be to God.

### Reflection – Putting on the armour of God in our battle against evil

**Our real enemies are not people but the devil and the evil spirits who use people as their agents (cf. Ephesians 6:12).** Eventually, love for God and others will overcome all evil in the world. This is because our real enemies are not the people who make life difficult for us but the devil and the evil spirits who use people as their agents to perpetrate evil. Thus, Jesus says to us: *But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you (Matthew 5:44)*. St Peter warns us to be alert and vigilant against temptation as the devil is like a lion prowling around, waiting to devour souls (cf. 1 Peter 5:8). We have to be ready for this ongoing spiritual battle by strengthening ourselves through an interior life of prayer and sacrifice in obedience to God's commandments and in conformity with His will, keeping our soul in the state of grace and learning to discern temptation in its various subtle forms.

**In all circumstances, hold faith as a shield, to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one (Ephesians 6:17).** Satan's prized targets for temptation are those who have faith in God and are close to Him. He will more than double his efforts in trying to trip those who have firm faith in and love for Jesus Christ. However, those who are committed to Christ are strengthened mightily against the wiles of the Evil One if they are open to God's grace of the present moment. For a committed follower of Jesus Christ, the path forward will be a clear, narrow and straight one. It is a narrow and straight because although life may offer many choices, our choices are limited to what are pleasing to God and in accordance to His commandments. It is a clear path because the teachings of Christ is simple and clear, pointing out to us what is good or evil without ambiguity, confusion or error. If we live our faith in our everyday life, we will find that Satan will find a hard time trying to enter our lives. *But without faith it is impossible to please Him (God) ... (Hebrews 11:6)*.

**So stand fast with your loins girded in truth..(Ephesians 6:14).** As committed believers of Christ, we have to remain in the truth of Christ. To do that, we have to adhere to His teachings and commandments. *Who (God) wills everyone to be saved and to come to knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4)*. The eternal truths of our faith will set us free from all falsehoods, lies, deception, confusion and error spawned by the Evil One who will try to dress up falsehoods to look like truths just like the way he tempted Eve to take the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden. In our present time of unprecedented self-love, false ideologies catering to the appeasement of the human ego are increasingly being promulgated aggressively like a religion. In a growing trend, sins like abortion, euthanasia, contraception, and homosexual acts are either legislated or widely accepted in the name of political correctness in an era of moral relativism. However, even in the widespread acceptance of falsehoods and evil, the eternal, unchanging truths of our faith highlight to us clearly the difference between good and evil, right and wrong. Though mankind may deviate more and more from the true path, God and His eternal truths remain unchanged.

**Clothed with righteousness as a breastplate (cf. Ephesians 6:14).** It is good for every believer of Christ to always remind ourselves that righteousness is from Jesus Christ. It is the strategy of Satan to trip those who try to answer God's call to holiness, by the temptation of self-righteousness and false discernment, both of which are doorways which Satan can enter through pride. We can stand in Christ's righteousness when our souls are kept in the state of grace. A soul in the state of grace can resist the wiles of Satan better. Thus, it is a good spiritual practice to avail ourselves frequently of the Sacrament of Reconciliation during which the greatest of miracles take place, and our souls are totally transformed and cleansed.

**Conversation with Jesus:** Precious Lord, You said You do exactly what the Heavenly Father commanded You to do so that the world may know that You love the Father (cf. John 14:31). In the same way, help me to fulfill Your will and adhere to Your commandments so that I can prove my love for You. Love and humility will be my strong weapons against temptation. Give me a great love for God's Word so that my conscience maybe formed in God's truths so that I may be able to discern between good and evil. Keep me from falling into the temptation of self-righteousness and pride which lead to false discernment. Mary, Refuge of Holy Love, pray for me. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus. [www.twohearts.hk](http://www.twohearts.hk)