

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the Gospel according to John (John 15:9-12)

As the Father loves Me, so I also love you. Remain in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will remain in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and remain in His love. I have told you this so that My joy may be in you and your joy may be complete. This is My commandment: love one another as I love you. The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection – True Joy is a fruit of Charity

Jesus teaches us how to attain true joy. The human heart is made to find its deepest joy in God (cf. Psalm 84:3). Thus, earthly pleasures and treasures do not fully satisfy our inmost longings. *My soul rests in God alone, from Whom comes my salvation (Psalm 62:2).* Jesus teaches us that our joy will be complete if we do what He does: remain in God's love by obeying God's commandments. Obedience to God is the key to true joy. We do not need to climb a high mountain or possess great earthly treasures or secure admiration or esteem from others, or endure self-imposed penances or sacrifices in order to attain the true joy that belongs to God. Like any good parent, God wants every one of His children to be truly happy. God's commandments are given to us out of His love and mercy in order that we walk firmly in the way of the truth. However, when we do not understand this truth and seek fulfillment and joy in created things or in other people, our hearts are closed to receiving true joy from God. True joy is not just a temporary uplifting of the physical senses but it is more of a fulfillment of the inner longings and yearnings of our souls which seek for and take delight in the presence of God, its Maker.

Remaining in God's love by keeping His commandments. *If you love Me, you will keep My commandments (John 14:15).* Love for God is no mere sentiment but a firm decision and commitment to walk in the footsteps of Christ by adhering to all His teachings. Thus, a solid proof of our love for God is the keeping of His commandments and precepts. Moses received the Ten Commandments engraved in stone from God on Mount Sinai. The Ten Commandments were engraved in stone tablets signifying God does not want us to tamper and amend His commandments but to embrace them with a spirit of love and trust. God's commandments and precepts are not to be turned into a system of legalism as if we can merit our salvation by following the commandments to the letter but without the spirit of love. No one by his own good works can attain his own salvation (cf. psalm 49:8). Salvation is an undeserved free gift from God; we are saved by grace not by works, through faith in Jesus Christ (cf. Ephesians 2:8, Galatians 2:16).

The order sequence of holy love. True love is holy and has its proper order. Jesus teaches us clearly how our love should be ordered: *You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22:37-39).* Once we can love God with all our heart, soul and mind, our love for others will become perfect. Our actions will have the purest intention. In this way, we will be transformed into what God has originally created us to be: to be perfect like Him, to live with Him, to share His joy and glory, to be members of His family. Holy love is from God. Holy love is poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit (cf. Romans 5:5) Who was given to us at Baptism to work on our sanctification, preparing us for our glorious, eternal inheritance and true home in heaven. With God, nothing is impossible (cf. Luke 1:37). And God's will stands forever.

Our joy is from the Presence of the Lord. *You will show me the path to life, abounding joy in Your Presence, the delights at Your right hand forever (Psalm 16:11).* A little baby feels insecure away from its mother, but is happy and contented once it is back in the arms of the mother. It is the same with our souls. *My soul yearns and pines for the courts of the LORD. My heart and flesh cry out for the living God (Psalm 84:3).* Yes, we are made for the highest purpose in the whole universe, nothing less than for God Himself and for heaven. God made us for His own glory, to find love, joy and fulfillment in Himself, our Highest Good. Just as He is great, His plan for each and every one of His children carries with it His infinite wisdom and mercy. Rejoice!

Conversation with Jesus: Precious Lord, love transforms and conquers all evil. This, You demonstrated profoundly through Your life on earth which is nothing but love and sacrifice for the sake of our eternal welfare. Fill me with Your love. Let Your love ignite the fire of the Holy Spirit within my soul. Lift my heart and let me feel Your holy presence. Help me understand the depth of Your call, and open my heart to receive Your mercy and peace. Give me a great love for Your commandments. *The law of Your mouth is more precious to me than heaps of silver and gold (Psalm 119:72).* Your commandments will lead me to true joy. Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for me. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.