

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the Gospel according to Matthew (*Matthew 5:48*)

So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect. The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection – The Call to Holiness

The Cross should inspire us to great love for God and conversely, great horror of sin. Our knowledge and personal experience of God should inspire us to an active and over-riding love for Him. The only reason for us to answer God's call to holiness is our love for Him which inspires us to please Him and to make ourselves fit for our final union with Him in heaven. True holiness is motivated only out of love for God. Our love for God is shallow and meaningless if we do not aspire to be holy as He alone is holy. Though our efforts of loving God may fall short sometimes, however the great desire to grow in holiness must be deeply embedded in our heart and mind. A deep and active love for God and all that He stands for will give purity of intention to our thoughts, words and actions. Our love for God is dormant if we do not have a great detestation and horror of sin as Jesus suffers for each sin that was/is/will be committed, and it is only sin that separates us from God. As in everything important, holiness starts with a firm decision followed by a firm commitment.

The importance of working at our interior life of prayer and sacrifices. We have to be very vigilant against lukewarmness, spiritual complacency, presumption of God's mercy, bodily concupiscence and the allure of the world and its false lights. We have to be focused on working at our interior life of prayer, fasting and sacrifices. Without constant prayer, one will easily lose one's faith. Thus St Paul says: *Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)*. Prayer is necessary for us to put ourselves consciously in God's presence, to open our hearts to Him to receive graces and to strengthen our love and relationship with God so that we can discern His will better and gain the strength to carry it out. Fasting strengthens our body, soul and spirit, and helps us gain mastery over ourselves. We need spiritual strength to seek first the kingdom of God to live a full Christian life.

We need to avail of the torrents of grace in the holy Sacraments. Immediately after His resurrection, Jesus instituted the Sacrament of Reconciliation, a great gift from God to help us to grow in holiness. Our sinful nature will always be with us as long as we are in the flesh, however, through the Sacrament of Reconciliation the sincere repentance of our sins will restore in full the sanctifying grace in our souls. We should never trivialize sin or tolerate the presence of sin in our soul but always remember what Jesus said to the sinner: *Go and sin no more (cf. John 8:11, 5:14)*. The presence of sins in our soul weakens us spiritually, lessens our love for God and others and makes us less joyful. For Catholics, the holy Mass is our most important primary source of grace. Frequent Confession, Holy Communion and Eucharistic Adoration, prayers, fasting and sacrifices offered with purity of intention are all indispensable for growing in holiness.

Opening ourselves to correction, renewal and transformation. To grow in holiness is to grow more Christ-like in humility and obedience to God's will in accepting and faithfully carrying our own crosses daily, and having the courage and generosity to practise self-denial in order that God and His commandments may come first, and that the interests of others maybe ahead of our own. *And be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new self, created in God's way in righteousness and holiness of truth (Ephesians 4:23-24)*. It is only through God's grace by the action of the Holy Spirit within us that our mind, heart and soul can be transformed in righteousness and holiness of truth. We hamper the important work of sanctification that God is doing in our souls by hardening and closing our hearts through unrepented sins, lukewarmness, complacency, preoccupation with earthly things, and having no time for God and prayers.

Conversation with Jesus: Precious Lord, You call me to holiness in order that I prepare myself for my final union with You so that You can share with me Your joy and glory in heaven when my life on earth is over. Without holiness, I cannot realize the full potential of the person You created me to be. My true nature is to be holy like my Maker. Through the power of Your graces, help me to grow in my love for God and all that He represents. Let my love for God be deep and active so that it translates into an over-riding desire to grow in holiness. Fill me with all the graces I need so that I can give You joy and become what You have created me to be. Give me the grace to live in Your Presence so that I may advance quickly in holiness. And when we appear together before the throne of our Heavenly Father when my time on earth is over, I hope He will see "another Christ"! Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for me. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.