

Scripture Reading

A Reading of the Gospel According to Matthew (Matthew 18:3-4)

Jesus said: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection ~ Maturing into Spiritual Childhood

Spiritual childhood. Unlike the physical world wherein maturing in age involves moving away from the parents and setting up new independent lives, in the spiritual realm it is quite the reverse. Maturing in faith means becoming more childlike in purity and innocence, and trusting more completely in God. Clearly, Jesus wants us to mature into spiritual childhood even to the extent of telling us that it is a necessary requirement to enter His Kingdom. Let us take a look at the attributes of spiritual childhood.

A little child trusts totally without question in its parents. Whilst we are given a freewill (so that we will not become robots!), God wants us to trust in Him freely because He is the only one whom we can totally trust without question. In His infinite love, wisdom and power, He has crafted a wonderful plan for our lives (cf Jeremiah 29:11) and He needs our full cooperation to bring about the fruition of that plan. There were times when we fall into deep anxiety and worries because we get into trouble through following our own whims and desires. Other times we may also face distress even though we are following what our conscience is telling us to do. In both cases, trust is needed: trust to follow God's plan for us instead of following our own desires in the first, trust to persevere in doing the right thing in the second. God's will sometimes comes with a cross, and trust is needed to carry the cross in peace, and to resist the temptation of giving up carrying the cross.

A little child has innocence and purity, has no pride, anger, grudges or unforgiveness. Humility is a great necessary virtue that Jesus never tires of teaching. This is because together with its twin virtue love, humility forms the bedrock on which other virtues can grow. "*Learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart.*" (Matthew 11:29). A prideful person can only see things from his/her own perspective, is unable to listen to others, is unteachable and his/her life revolves around himself/herself. He/she is easily overcome by slights, harbours grudges, anger and unforgiveness. We are asked to become humble like a child because there is really no true basis for our personal pride. Whatever we have or achieved is through our cooperation with the grace of God given freely to us. What we can claim as our own are our sins. Abraham stated the truth when he said he was nothing but dust and ashes (cf. Genesis 18:27). Outside of God, we are also nothing but dust and ashes. *Humility and fear of the Lord bring wealth, honour and life.* (Proverb 22:4).

A little child is totally dependent upon his parents for all his needs. In His Divine Providence, God supplies for all our needs which are different from desires. He tells us not to worry but to trust that being the good Father that He is, He will take care of all our needs. "*Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?*" (Luke 11:11-12). God reassures us that He cares about even the smallest details of our lives. He even bothered to count the hairs on our heads! (cf. Luke 12:7, Matthew 10:30). He further assures us that before we ask for our needs He is already working on it (cf. Isaiah 65:24). We are worth the price of His Son's Precious Blood and we need not worry that our Heavenly Father will forget about us.

Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, I come before You in my nothingness that I maybe filled with You. You have taught me many lessons on the virtue of humility, of littleness. I am to walk in the way of littleness with my heart always open to my God and to the others around me. I am to be Your little child, fully trusting in You. I am to be docile to the inspirations of Your Spirit so that You may be able to achieve Your purpose in my life. I know You can be totally trusted. Help me Lord to overcome my human weakness so that I may always be Your little child. Mary, Protectress of the Faith, come to my aid always. Thank You Jesus. Praise You Jesus.