

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the Book of Psalms (Ps 103:1-2)

Praise the LORD, my soul; all my inmost being, praise His holy name. Praise the LORD, my soul, and forget not all His benefits. The Word of the Lord. R. Thanks be to God.

Reflection ~ My Vocation is to Praise God

God deserves to be praised. *What is mankind that You are mindful of them, human beings that You care for them? (Psalm 8:4).* For all that God has done for us, He deserves all the love and praise we can produce from our hearts. Out of pure love He created us in His own image with a free will, and placed our first parents in a paradise. And when our first parents sinned and fell from grace, He sent not a prophet but His very own Son to redeem us by no less than His Son's own Precious Blood. In Christ and through Christ, God lifted us up from the mire of our sins to the exalted dignity of His sons and daughters, raising us up higher than before the fall of our first parents. Like a most tender mother, God cares for us even to the extent of knowing the number of hairs on our heads (cf. Matthew 10:30). He gives us His Holy Spirit as a deposit guaranteeing the full, glorious inheritance that is promised to those who love Him (cf. Ephesians 1:14). Yes, our inheritance is no less than God Himself and His glorious Kingdom of love, peace and joy.

If we don't praise God, the stones will! *"I tell you," He replied, "if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out." (Luke 19:40).* Jesus was riding on a colt, triumphantly entering Jerusalem and a group of disciples were praising Him in loud voices. In response some Pharisees asked Jesus to rebuke His disciples. Jesus responded by remarking that if the disciples kept quiet, the stones would praise Him! How about us? Do we praise God as often and with as much love as we should? We are much more blessed in many ways than the first disciples. We have the sacraments, daily Mass, the Eucharist, fuller measure of the Holy Spirit and Christ's presence with us all the time especially in the Eucharist. Does my heart rise up in praise of the Lord? If no, do I need to contemplate more on the Lord's goodness?

Praising God with a pure heart can defeat the Enemy and stop him in his tracks. *Through the praise of children and infants you have established a stronghold against your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger. (Psalm 8:2).* Praising God declares God is God, Jesus Christ is Son of the Living God, renders to God what is due to Him, establishes God's authority over our situation and the evil one retreats.

Praising God can protect against depression. *The Spirit of the Lord has sent me to bestow on them ...the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. (cf. Isaiah 61:3).* Many of us have experienced the mountain-top feeling of our hearts filling with pure joy when we let go of ourselves and put our hearts and minds into praising God especially when making a charismatic retreat with fellow worshippers. We can, on an individual basis, make praise of the Lord part of our daily prayer life. It works just as well in uplifting our tired hearts especially if the heart and soul have already been cleansed by the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Praise is an acceptable sacrifice to God (cf. Hebrews 13:15). Praising the Lord with loving attitudes of humility and obedience helps us to stay focussed on God and open our eyes and minds to God's merciful and loving attributes. Knowing more about Him, we can relate to Him better. King David set a good example. He praised God seven times a day (cf. Psalm 119:164). No wonder the Lord said that David was a man after His own heart (cf. 1 Samuel 13:14).

Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, all adoration, all praise, all love, all thanksgiving, all gratitude be to You, the Father and the Holy Spirit now and forever! Yes, I was born to praise You and to enter into Your joy. I join my praise to that of the angels and the saints in heaven to exalt You to the highest glory. Sanctify my lips and free my heart from the bondages of sin that it may be ready at every moment to render You the praise that You deserve. May I praise You not only by words but also by how I live my life sung out to the glory of Your Name. Mary, Protectress of the Faith, teach me to praise Jesus in everything that I do. Thank You Jesus. Praise You Jesus.