

## Scripture Reading

### A Reading of the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans (*Romans 12:1*)

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God - this is your spiritual act of worship. The Word of the Lord. R. Thanks be to God.

### Scripture Reflection – My body, a living and holy sacrifice

**We make up for what is lacking in Christ's sufferings.** *Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of His body, which is the church (Colossians 1:24).* Jesus died to redeem everyone from sin, death and hell. His Precious Blood more than completely paid for the redemption of everyone; yet not everyone is saved because people persist in their bondage to sin. *Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil (John 3:19).* Through our prayers and sacrifices we can help bring about the repentance of more souls. Thus, we each have a share in Christ's divine mission.

**We are here on earth for a divine purpose.** God predestined us for heaven to be His sons and daughters through Jesus: *In love He predestined us to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ (cf. Ephesians 1:5),* and to do good works: *For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do (Ephesians 2:10).* This good work which was planned by God before we are born is a noble one and is no lesser than to participate in Christ's divine mission and to build up His kingdom on earth through each person's unique talents, gifts and roles. Those who are baptised into Christ share Christ's kingship in expanding His kingdom here on earth, His priesthood in offering sacrifices for others, and prophethood in spreading the Good News of Christ.

**God is closest to us when we suffer.** *The Lord is close to the broken-hearted (Psalm 34:18).* A sick child may not be aware of it but its mother can be found in no other place than its bedside especially when it is undergoing its most fretful moments. God is more tender-hearted than the best of mothers in the world. *Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! (Isaiah 49:15).*

**Suffering is a step to true glory.** When referring to His imminent death, Jesus said, *"The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified."* (cf. *John 12:23*). Jesus explains further this seeming contradiction of logic by giving the analogy of a grain which must die in order to give rise to many more grains (cf. *John 12:24*). The writer of the letter to the Hebrews further touches on this paradox: *Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God (cf. Hebrews 12:2).*

**Rejoice to be counted worthy to suffer for Jesus.** The apostles and the early church set a good example in the face of persecution for their faith. St. Peter exhorts us: *"Rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when His glory is revealed" (1 Peter 4:13).* The more we participate in Christ's sufferings on earth the more we will be overjoyed in heaven! Through our own sufferings we can gain an insight into how much Christ loves us through an appreciation of the sufferings He has undergone for each of us.

### Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, You have shown beyond a shadow of doubt how much You love and treasure me. You did it through Your own tears, blood, sufferings, agonies, sorrows and pains. Through all these, You present Yourself a perfect, holy and living Sacrifice to Your Father so that I could be with You for eternity. Lord, every time this Supreme Sacrifice of Yours is renewed on all the altars throughout the world during Holy Mass, I too place on the altar my own body and soul, a living and sincere sacrifice in union with Yours. Sanctify it Lord, with Your Most Precious Blood that it may be acceptable to our Heavenly Father. Through my participation in Your Passion, help me to gain a deeper insight of Your love for me. Mary, Protectress of the Faith, form my heart only for Jesus. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.