

Scripture Reading

A Reading of the Gospel According to Luke (*Luke 9:18-20*)

Once when Jesus was praying in private and His disciples were with Him, He asked them, “Who do the crowds say I am?” They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, that one of the prophets of long ago has come back to life.” “But what about you?” He asked. “Who do you say I am?” Peter answered, “God’s Messiah.” The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection – Do I have a personal relationship with the Lord?

How do I identify with Jesus? We can learn a great lesson from St. Paul, the Evangelist. With the tenacity of a bulldog, St. Paul never failed to proclaim his close identification with the Lord as an apostle of Christ which He always asserted at the start of His apostolic letters to the communities that he had set up for the Kingdom of God. In doing so, Paul set out on the right footing and never missed the focus of his mission i.e. to build up Christ’s Kingdom in the hearts of all people on earth. **Once we have a full grasp of our true identity like St. Paul, we will never lose focus of our true mission on earth.** St. Paul’s strong identification with the Lord is the fruit of his great love, faith and trust in the Lord. Because of this, St. Paul was able to forge ahead despite numerous beatings, persecution, imprisonment and danger of all kinds.

Jesus gives us the true meaning of friendship and calls us His friends. Jesus did not call His disciples His friends at the beginning of their relationship. It was only after He revealed Himself as the Messiah, the Son of God that Jesus proceeded on to develop His personal relationship with His disciples by calling them His friends (cf. John 15:14-15). Otherwise, it would not be on the right footing. Jesus is firstly God (i.e. Son of God) then Man (Jesus of Nazareth). The only reason He was borne incarnate as a human being is that He be able to suffer and die for our sins as decreed by God, the Father. There is no other reason. In every moment Jesus is in the will of God the Father. Jesus gives a new meaning to friendship: *Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends (John 15:13)*. Because Jesus came without His glory His disciples were able to render Jesus the friendship that an ordinary human being can have. They kept Him company, took care of His physical needs, laughed and relaxed with Him before His Sorrowful Passion began.

Our God is a very personal God and is personified by pure love (cf. 1 John 4:8). We can see how personal our God is through His actions and what Jesus taught us through Sacred Scripture. When our first parents Adam and Eve fell from grace through wilful disobedience, God the Father chose His only one and beloved Son, Jesus to be the sacrifice for our sins to bring about the salvation and redemption of all God’s children. Jesus did not come to earth as a military commander commanding a huge army and never needing to lift his own finger in the task He was entrusted with. Instead, He came as a lowly person such that even those in positions of religious authority never recognised. Instead of the form of a military king the Jews expected Jesus to come in, Jesus saved the world with His own flesh, wounds, blood, tears and sufferings. We are very precious to God. *And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered (Matthew 10:30)*.

Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, my personal Lord and Saviour, You are also my best Friend! I embrace Your Sacred Heart with all my love united to the Divine Love of God, my Heavenly Father and the Holy Love of Mary and St. Joseph and of all the saints and angels, uniting myself to You at Holy Communion in each Eucharistic Liturgy taking place throughout time. As You offered Your life to me embracing me as Your friend, I too offer You my heart, my life, my entirety for the glory of our Heavenly Father, in honour of Your Sorrowful Passion and Immaculate Heart of Mary and for the salvation of all souls. As one always seeks out the company of a good friend, teach me how to live in Your Presence always, You who are always present in my heart. Let not my heart be another Gethsemane due to my forgetfulness and neglect but a tabernacle of consolation for You from all the sins committed against You in this world. Give me the zeal to share with You Your divine mission of saving souls. Mary, Mother of Salvation, teach me to be like Jesus. Thank You Jesus. Praise You Jesus.