

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the First Letter of John (1 John 3:16-18)

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth. The Word of the Lord. R. Thanks be to God.

Reflection – Draw Closer to God by Loving Others More Ardently

Whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me (Matthew 25:45). God has a special predilection for the poor, weak and needy. When His only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ was born incarnate into our world, He becomes one of the poor, weak and needy. *Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God (Luke 6:20).* Through His strong identification with the poor and weak, Jesus gives us many opportunities to show our love for Him by helping those around us who are poor, weak or needy in the spiritual or emotional or material sense. Let us see the face of Jesus especially in the weak, poor or needy who needs our help.

Forgiving others and forgetting past injuries. *If you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift (Matthew 5:23-24).* God tells us that He is not pleased with our gifts when we offer them with a heart that has not tried to make peace with others. God has commanded us to forgive others as often as they offend us (cf. Matthew 18:21-22). God would not issue any command without supplying the necessary grace to do it. As sinners ourselves, we cannot withhold forgiveness from others if we wish God to forgive and forget our own sins. God accepts us with all our weakness and sins and do not dwell on them but call us to holiness. In the same way we are to accept the weaknesses of others and treat them with love and pray for them as Jesus prayed on the cross: Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing.

Kindness in our thoughts about others. The mind is a favourite target of the Enemy of our souls for temptation of unkindness, unloving thoughts, dislike, hatred, suspicion, judgementalism and accusation. During temptation our minds are recalled to the faults and wrong doings of others. Allowing our minds to dwell on the negative aspects of others will lead to negative thoughts and behaviour towards them. Unloving thoughts lead to unloving words and unloving actions. Dwelling on the weaknesses, faults and sins of others prevents us from fully receiving the graces God wants to give us.

Kindness in what we say about others. Scripture has much to say about the power of the tongue: *the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell (James 3:5-6).* Shall the tongue we use to praise God be also the instrument to bring down others? What we say about others reveal the state of our hearts. A good tree yields good fruits. A loving heart will yield loving words. Control over the tongue is an indication of one's great control over self.

Facilitate God's saving action in the lives of others by praying constantly for them. On the cross Jesus uttered: I thirst (John 19:28). Jesus, the personification of love thirsts for our loving response to His sacrificial love. Out of tremendous concern for the welfare of our souls Jesus thirsts for the salvation of all sinners which He makes His brothers and sisters as they become, through Him, the adopted sons and daughters of God. Jesus needs us to be His mouth, hands and feet to help bring His beloved brothers and sisters to their rightful inheritance prepared for them by God, His Eternal Father since the foundation of the earth. *How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!" (Isaiah 52:7).*

Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, You are love. You ask me to show my love for You by loving You in others. Purify my heart and mind and fill them with holy and divine love. Help me to forgive completely anyone who has offended me. May my mind never harbour unloving thoughts about others. May my mouth which I use to praise You never speak an unloving word about others. May I be filled with zeal to help bring my brothers and sisters in Christ closer to You, and alleviate Your thirst for souls. Through my care and kindness towards others may I grow in ever increasing love for You, my blessed Saviour and God. Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for me. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.