

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the Book of Prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 43:1-2)

But now, this is what the Lord says - He who created you, Jacob, He who formed you, Israel: "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are Mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. The Word of the Lord. R. Thanks be to God.

Reflection – Even though an army surrounds me, I will not fear

I will be with you till the end of time (cf. Matthew 28:20). We are not alone with our troubles. Before Jesus ascends into heaven, He assures His followers that He will be with them till the end. He says He will not leave us orphans but will come to us (cf. John 14:18). God's love for each one of us is more tender than that of the best mothers. "*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).* Jesus promises: *Where two or three are gathered in My name, I will be in their midst (cf. Matthew 18:20).* As a little child each of us can remember the reassuring presence of our parent in time of need and distress. God never sleeps and is present in us and around us.

For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future (Jeremiah 29:11). Am I worried about my future? God has a wonderful plan for each and every person that He created. The Lord says: do not worry unduly about the material things in this life (cf. Matthew 6:25-34). "*No one can serve two masters... You cannot serve both God and money (Matthew 6:24).* An attachment to money/material things elevates it to a false god, and brings with it many anxieties and unfulfilled appetites. We are more precious than the sparrows which God feeds even though they neither harvest nor store and the grass in the fields which God clothes with beautiful flowers even though they neither labour nor spin. *But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well (Matthew 6:33).*

Our sufferings will be short lived and will be worth it. *I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us (Romans 8:18).* St. Paul further reminds us: *We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God (Acts 14:22).* Walking in the footsteps of Christ, we carry our own crosses behind Him, knowing that if we ascend together with Him to Calvary, we will also be resurrected with Him in glory. Our sufferings in union with that of Christ will serve to purify the world and help Him save souls and build up God's kingdom. **A bright future awaits us.** *I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which He has called you, the riches of His glorious inheritance in His holy people (Ephesians 1:18).* God has not brought us forth to a life of suffering on earth but to a glorious eternity where we are co-heirs with Jesus Christ, only Son of the Living God and who is also our brother. That is why Jesus says: I come that you may have life and have it abundantly (cf. John 10:10). In his attempt to describe heaven, St. Paul tells us that no eyes have seen nor ears heard nor can we imagine the things God has planned for those who love Him (cf. 1 Corinthians 2:9).

You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in You (Isaiah 26:3).

Without trust in God our hearts will be like a leaf hanging on a branch. It can easily be shaken by any turbulence in the air, be it a little breeze or a mighty hurricane. Without trust guarding the heart, it is easy for the evil one to sow unholy fears into our hearts. Once this takes the place of faith and trust in God, our peace of mind is also sacrificed and our problems weigh more heavily on our shoulders. "*Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in Him (Jeremiah 17:7).*

Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, I come before You with my heart heavily burdened with cares, worries and problems. I seek Your holy peace. In full trust, I open my heart to You to surrender everything in it that is a burden to me: my attachment to myself / others, worldly things and evil. Soothe my heart and calm my fears. Take charge of my situation. Take me into Your tender arms and allow me to feel Your love, a love that compels You to die for me. In humility and repentance I seek from You the forgiveness of all my sins. Come into my heart and take up Your rightful throne on it. Shine the light of God's truth into my mind and heart so that I may keep alive my hope in Your wonderful promises and Your help in every situation and problem in my life. Help me to keep my trust in You strong so that I can say with the psalmist: *Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then I will be confident (Psalm 27:3).* Mary, Mother of Salvation and Mother of Perpetual Help, intercede for Your child. Thank You Jesus. Praise You Jesus. www.twohearts.hk