

Scripture Reading

A Reading of the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans (*Romans 8:28*)

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose. The Word of the Lord. R. Thanks be to God.

Reflection – Everything that happened to me is a grace

My life seems directionless and purposeless. God is love (cf. 1 John 4:8) and He created us out of love. God demonstrates how much He really loves us when He sent Jesus, His only Son as a sacrifice to redeem to us what we lost through our sins (cf. John 3:16). *See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! (1 John 3:1).* Like a concerned parent overflowing with pure love for His precious child, God has a good plan (cf. Jeremiah 29:11) and has prepared a home in heaven (cf. John 14:2) for every one of His children. Besides giving us the highest dignity as children of God, He created us for good works (cf. Ephesians 2:10) and gives to each of His children a unique role in God's plan of salvation (cf. Mark 16:15). No child of God needs to feel unloved or useless. We are missionaries of God!

I have so much trouble and suffering in my life. Suffering comes from sins of mankind. It was not in the original plan of God. However, when Jesus came to earth, He demonstrates that suffering can be meritorious and redemptive when accepted and offered to God like what He did. We may get sufferings through no fault of our own. We may suffer spiritually or physically from the sins of our parents or ancestors but to every suffering there comes the corresponding grace to assist in the suffering and the opportunities to gain merit and eternal good. Thus, through the patient acceptance of sufferings offered to God in union with Christ's own sufferings, redeeming grace is multiplied and overflows not just to those we love but also to other people, our brothers and sisters in Christ whom we do not know but are loved equally by the Lord. Thus through our personal sufferings and cross we participate powerfully in Christ's salvific mission and earned eternal merits for ourselves.

Life is not fair to me. In His infinite wisdom, God does not give equal gifts to each of His children. However, we know that our final judgement by God will be fair for God is just and merciful. God's perspective is always towards our eternal good. What really matters in God's eyes are not the gifts that come from His bounty but how we respond to life's situation. How difficult it is for the rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven (cf. Matthew 19:23). Jesus identifies with the poor and demonstrates how important it is for us to be detached from earthly treasures when He chose to be born into poverty of lowly and ordinary parents.

I find it difficult to forgive myself and others. Forgiveness like water must filter down from the top. Likewise, there is an order to love because of the existence of God. When God forgives us we are truly liberated and receive a freedom of the highest order - spiritual freedom which not only helps us attain our highest potential on earth but determines our final destination in eternity. When we receive forgiveness from God for our own sins, we receive strength to forgive ourselves. We also gain the ability to forgive others not because they deserve it but because of the love we bear for God who is so good to us. God is constantly waiting with outstretched arms for each of His children to come to Him and to express sorrow for his/her own sins.

I am a failure. I am too weak, I cannot do it. St Paul lamented that he did what he did not want to do and failed to do the things he wanted to do (cf. Romans 7:15-25). He admitted that this is due to his sinful nature. All are sinners and fall short of the glory of God (cf. Romans 3:23). However, the grace of Christ is freely available to those whose hearts are open to God's redeeming action. Acknowledging Christ's graces working within him, St. Paul despite his previous lamentation was able to declare, "I can do all things through Him who gives me strength." (cf. Philippians 4:13).

Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, life is not easy but You never promised a life of joy in this passing world but more importantly in the one that never ends (cf. Romans 14:17). You underwent so much suffering to earn me this promise and to make available to me all the graces and help I need on this earth in order that I can attain this wondrous promise of Yours. Through Your life of sacrifice on this earth, You assure me that my sufferings united to Yours and offered to You will never be in vain but will share in Your salvific action for souls. Whatever I suffer in this life for Your sake, You will make up for it in heaven. The greater my sufferings accepted with love and patience the greater will be my joy when Your glory is fully revealed. Lord I cannot praise You enough. You make my life worth living! Mary, Protectress of the Faith, pray for me. Thank You Jesus. Praise You Jesus.