

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the Second Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians (2 Corinthians 5:6-8)

Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. **For we live by faith, not by sight.** We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. The Word of the Lord. R. Thanks be to God.

Reflection – Feel-good Mentality Fuelled by Unholy Fears – We walk by Faith not by Senses

The growing prevalence of the feel-good mentality. The world is becoming an increasingly stressful place to live in. Globally, there are mega problems on many fronts that can have a direct impact on individual lives. Unstable financial systems, abnormal climatic changes, breakdown of traditional institutions like marriage and family, moral degeneration, escalation of greed and materialism, violence to innocent lives – just to name a handful. The truth of the difference between good and evil is obscured, and sin is supported and legitimised by legislation. Much evil is practised now more so than ever as evil is not recognised as such (cf. 2 Timothy 4:3-4). The heart that is not solidly rooted in God seeks an escape mechanism in order to grasp some semblance of internal peace. Like an ostrich hiding its head in the sand, it resorts to the easiest way out as one tries desperately to convince oneself that everything is fine without garnering the courage to seek out the real truth. Thus, the first casualty of this feel-good mentality is truth. In this, the heart allows itself to be deceived due to weakness in faith. For instance, in considering the realm of life after death, the feel-good mentality will assert that there is no hell and will reject any contrary idea.

Feel-good mentality goes back in history. The feel-good mentality has a history going as far back to the days when Jesus walked the earth. When Jesus was giving the discourse on the Bread of Life, many disciples walked away and left Him (cf. John 6:66) because that doctrine is simply too outrageous for their ‘delicate’ feelings (cf. John 6:52, 60). They could not understand the language of the Eucharist which is a language of love beyond what they can understand. In the narrow confines of their minds and hearts, they fail to understand that God in His wondrous love can really do such a thing as Jesus took the pains to explain (cf. John 6: 53-58).

Unholy fear fuels the feel-good mentality. The feel-good mentality is driven by an underlying fear that the person cannot overcome due to a weakness in faith and trust in God. It is an unholy fear given by the enemy of our salvation. Helped by a weak foundation of faith, the enemy easily introduces unholy fear into such a heart. This unholy fear fuels anxiety, doubts, distrust and selfish self-preservation. Being unable to face the truth, such a soul is ready to believe anything that will alleviate her/his internal fears, thus inviting deception. As a result that person’s reaction to a challenging situation will depend on what will provide her/him with the comfort that she/he needs in order to ‘feel good’. Accordingly, her/his opinion and reaction will be based.

True discernment versus human opinion. Human opinion is usually based on feelings which are subjective and shaped by self-interest in the matter. For example, a person in authority may force his own opinion on subordinate others out of self-interest. Or a person may deceive herself when she reacts to a challenging situation in order to feel good. Human opinion at best is fraught with many factors that bring in elements of untruth. To live a righteous life, an understanding of the difference between true discernment and human opinion is necessary. Human opinion lacks the enlightening light of truth provided by the Holy Spirit. In a true discernment the person considers the situation in an objective manner without bringing in any personal feelings or self-interest, studies the available facts calmly, and does not come to a hasty conclusion until all the facts are prudently considered. A person with true discernment opens his/her heart to the light of the Holy Spirit in prayer before coming to a decision or conclusion about a situation or issue. In a true discernment a person does not impose a hasty personal opinion on another. Human opinion serves self whilst discernment serves the truth.

Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, help me not to fall prey to deception through weakness of my faith and unholy fears. Send me the fullness of Your Spirit to teach me the truth. Cast out from my heart all unholy fears that do not come from You. Help me practise prudence and always check my thoughts against the standard of Your holy truth. The truth will set me free (cf. John 8:32). Never let me be hasty in forming opinions and judgement. Give me the gift of discernment so that I may lead a life in accordance with Your teachings. Let Your divine love guard my heart and Your holy truth guard my mind. Love rejoices in the truth (cf. 1 Corinthians 13:6) and perfect love casts out all fear (1 John 4:18). Mary, Protectress of the faith, protect me from deception. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus