

Scripture Reading

A Reading of the Letter of St. Paul to the Colossians (*Colossians 1:24*)

Now I rejoice in what I am suffering for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of His body, which is the church. The Word of the Lord. R. Thanks be to God.

Reflection – I Make up what is lacking in Christ's Suffering

The world is redeemed through the suffering of Jesus. Christ's death on the Cross opens up the gates of heaven and paid in full the price of the redemption and salvation for each and every person on earth. Because of Christ's Precious Blood shed on the Cross we gain our reconciliation with God the Father and can stand before the throne of God fully justified – as if we had not sinned! God could have decreed another way for Jesus to save the whole of mankind. However, He did not. Significantly God wants to show us that human suffering when accepted and borne patiently like Jesus Christ, His Son is meritorious and has deep spiritual value. *By Christ's wounds you are healed (Isaiah 53:5)*. Through His life, Passion and death, by example, Jesus teaches us to accept our sufferings with patience and love.

Share in Christ's Suffering. Jesus assures His apostles that they will get a share in His sufferings: *You will indeed drink from My cup...* (*Matthew 20:23*), indicating that to follow Him, a life of sacrifice is necessary. *Then He said to them all: "Whoever wants to be My disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow Me (Luke 9:23)*. No one is greater than the Divine Master and we have to imitate His life of sacrifice and carry our own crosses and walk in His footsteps every day of our lives. In another context, God says: *You will be for Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation to serve God the Father (Exodus 19:6, Revelation 1:6)*. A priest offers sacrifices to God for atonement of his sins and those of others. Sharing in the priesthood of our Divine High Priest, Jesus Christ we are called to make sacrifices for others, to offer up all our sufferings, trials, difficulties, persecution, sorrows in life in union with the Supreme Sacrifice of our Divine High Priest for the good of His Church, the Body of Christ.

Share in Christ's work of redemption – our great mission on earth. With Christ's Supreme Sacrifice on the Cross, the gates of heaven were thrown open and everyone has a free ticket to heaven. Salvation is given free of charge to everyone, it is given through the graces Jesus won for us on the Cross. It is not merited by any human good deeds done on our part. However to get into heaven, we need to be properly attired just like for any other important event. The proper attire is our soul white and stain-free, cleansed by the precious Blood of Jesus Christ. The human freewill has to cooperate with God's plan of salvation. There must be a movement of the freewill to accept Christ as one's personal Lord and Saviour. The eternal truth: Christ is the way, the truth and the life (cf. John 14:6), must be accepted. However, due to spiritual blindness as a result of sin, people blindly rejected Christ, the Light of the World and His wondrous promise of an eternal life purchased by the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ. *This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil (John 3:19)*. As God's people in the light, we are called to bring Christ's light into the darkened lives of our brothers and sisters through the way we live our lives, offering up all our pains, discomfort, sorrows, trials and difficulties in our lives so that God's mercy, love and Promise of eternal life can be accepted by more people, enlarging God's family and making Him loved as He deserves.

Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, the apostles rejoiced that they merited to share in Your sufferings, knowing that to the degree they share in Your bitter Cup, they will be revealed in glory in Paradise, our true and eternal home. Through faith I know that the time when I feel so much pain weighing down my body, it is when You go to a loved one to alleviate and lighten her/his cross and pain. Thank You Lord for my suffering. At the time when I feel You were so far away and absent from me, it is when You went to a loved one to offer comfort and solace of Your loving Presence. Thank You Lord for this suffering. At the time when I was assailed by doubts and confusion, it was when You went to a loved one to strengthen her/his faith and trust in God at the time of temptation. Thank You Lord for this suffering. Lord I know I will never be given more than what I can bear (cf. 1 Corinthians 10:13) and that with every suffering there is a corresponding amount of grace available to me to overcome or bear it (cf. 1 Corinthians 10:13). Thank You Lord for Your great wisdom in inviting me to share in Your plan of salvation and redemption. I too rejoice with the saints and apostles that You merited me to share in Your bitter Cup. Mary, Protectress of the Faith, pray for me. Thank You Jesus. Praise You Jesus.