

Scripture Reading

A Reading of the Gospel according to Matthew (*Matthew 14:3-12*)

Now Herod had arrested John and bound him and put him in prison because of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, for John had been saying to him: "It is not lawful for you to have her." Herod wanted to kill John, but he was afraid of the people, because they considered John a prophet. On Herod's birthday the daughter of Herodias danced for the guests and pleased Herod so much that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she asked. Prompted by her mother, she said, "Give me here on a platter the head of John the Baptist." The king was distressed, but because of his oaths and his dinner guests, he ordered that her request be granted and had John beheaded in the prison. His head was brought in on a platter and given to the girl, who carried it to her mother. John's disciples came and took his body and buried it. Then they went and told Jesus. The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection ~ Jesus proves it is worthwhile to stand up for the Truth

John the Baptist paid for the Truth with his life. John the Baptist was deemed great by Jesus even before John died. John was not afraid to undergo great personal sacrifice and go against public opinion in his attempt to get close to God in the early years of his life. He spent a long time in the desert, wearing animal skins and eating locusts and wild honey. When he came out preaching repentance of sin, he spoke against King Herod for taking the king's brother's wife. John paid for speaking up for the truth with his own life, a most precious gift to God.

Three young men, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego braved the fiery furnace in standing up for the Truth. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused to worship and pay homage to the golden statue set up by King Nebuchadnezzar, breaking the royal decree. They were ordered to be thrown into the furnace which was fired up much higher than usual. The next day they emerged from the furnace unharmed, causing the king to realise the power of the true God and to praise Him. The young men were rewarded for their blind trust in God.

Jesus paid for the Truth with His life and redeemed God's Kingdom. While on earth, Jesus was not accepted by the Jewish leaders, priests and scribes. He was unjustly accused of many things by the Jewish religious leaders who were jealous of Him and felt threatened by His popularity among the Jewish people. Jesus was accused of blasphemy when He told them that He is the Son of God. Even when Jesus was dying on the Cross He was taunted to come down from the Cross to prove that He is the Son of God. How sins hardened and blinded hearts against God!

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. (John 14:6). Jesus is the Truth and so are His Word, His commandments, His precepts, His values and everything He stands for. These are divine truths – unchanging, immutable, eternal, can stand the test of time and truly liberating. These are the divine truths that the human heart seeks to be consoled and fulfilled. They are not to be confused with earthly truths which are passing, transient and have no power in themselves.

To the Jews who had believed Him, Jesus said, "If you hold to My teaching, you are really My disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (John 8:31-32). To know and understand the Truth, one needs to believe in the person and Lordship of Jesus Christ, the only Son of God. Jesus is the reason for our being (cf. Colossians 1:16). Jesus is the only gold coin that we can pay God for the debt due to our sins (cf. Ephesians 1:7). Only through the Precious Blood of Jesus can we be truly liberated from the spiritual death our sins earn for us. Only through Jesus' Sacrifice on Mount Calvary can we be given eternal life.

Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, You are the way, the truth and the life. In every present moment You witness souls fall to perdition through compromise of the truth. Help each soul understand the need to work on his/her salvation at every present moment. Show each soul how she/he separates herself/himself from Your mournful Heart and how this grieves Your Heart. Correct each conscience in the truth of the difference between good and evil. Bring each soul into the light of truth so that all can see the truth with clarity. Help us to treasure the divine truths of our faith. Give us the holy boldness to stand up for the truth even when it is against popular opinion and may result in persecution. Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for us. Thank You Jesus. Praise You Jesus.