

Scripture Reading

A Reading of the Gospel According to Luke (Luke 2:7)

And She brought forth Her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger; because there was no room for Them in the inn. The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection ~ **Let's make room for Jesus in our hearts this Christmas**

Let's ask for divine power to forgive completely those who have offended us. Jesus tells us that God can only forgive us if we grant forgiveness to those who offended us (cf. Matthew 6:15). God's grace is needed to forgive others and we must always seek God's help whenever we need to forgive our offenders. To be in unforgiveness is to be in terrible bondage to the evil one. Unforgiveness is a spiritual cancer, it ferments bitterness and hatred that close up the heart to receive God's graces. All offerings and sacrifices from a heart that refuses to forgive are not acceptable to God. *Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift (Matthew 5:23-24).*

Let's surrender to Jesus all regrets of the past. Jesus tells us that we are being recreated in newness and grace whenever we repent sincerely of our sins especially through the Sacrament of Confession. Through Confession, the stream of Blood and Water from the pierced side of Crucified Jesus washes away all our iniquities and fills us to the full the sanctifying graces we lose whenever we sin. *See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland (Isaiah 43:19).*

Let's surrender to Jesus all our unholy fears of the future. Let's demonstrate our faith in God by placing our trust in God's Providence for the future. Will worrying improve the situation? *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).* Will any parent not care about his child's future? Jesus tells us not to worry. He said: *Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? (Matthew 6:26-27).* Unholy fears and anxieties are not from God and weaken our faith, while trust in God's Providence brings peace.

Let's surrender to Jesus all our disorderly desires, passions, appetites, bad habits and vices. Jesus said: *Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest (Matthew 11:28).* When the prodigal son returned to his father, he was welcomed into his father's arms without chastisement. Even from afar, his father was on the lookout for him. No question was asked. The prodigal was warmly welcomed back with a fatherly love. Let us come confidently to the Lord and ask to be released of all bondages to our vices: pride/vanity and excessive trust in our own abilities, envy of others' situation, constant seeking of profits and material wealth, lust/impure thoughts and habitual pandering to the pleasures of the body, gluttony in food and inordinate seeking of material things, anger/bad temper/over-sensitiveness, and the avoidance of physical or spiritual work. *He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on Him, and by His wounds we are healed (Isaiah 53:5).* Yes, Jesus is the only one who heals perfectly, free of charge.

Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, I open my heart to You. You know me more than I know myself. You know which areas of my life are in darkness and lacking in Your love. Take my heart and recreate it in Your love to make it like Yours, tender and humble. Let Your Holy Spirit shine His light of truth into all the areas in my life that You want to reclaim as Yours. Give me perfect contrition for all my faults, failings and sins that are shown to me. Through the grace of contrition, renew my mind and spirit and help me to put on the Lord Jesus Christ. Be enthroned in my heart. Give me the grace to seek first the Kingdom of God then all things I need will be given to me as You promised (cf. Matthew 6:33). Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for me. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.