

Scripture Reading

A Reading of the Letter of St Paul to the Romans (*Romans 8:33*)

Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. The Word of the Lord. R. Thanks be to God.

Reflection ~ Our Minds, a battlefield of Satan

Satan - the accuser who accuses us before God day and night (cf. Revelation 12:10). Satan, the enemy of our salvation works hard at accusing us before God and in our minds. He hates God and his ultimate aim is to prevent God's children from inheriting the glorious eternal inheritance that God has prepared for each of His children. Satan works hard and in a hidden way in our minds to bring about a way of thinking that works against our faith and that will pave the way for us to fall into sin, thereby distancing ourselves from God.

His secret weapon – deception: lies and falsehoods. Working under cover through weak souls, Satan leads the whole world astray (cf. Revelation 12:9). He is called prince of this world (cf. John 14:30, John 12:31) as much of this world is currently under his evil spell. Satan is the master liar. He tries to convince the world that he does not exist. This he does with great success. He plants thoughts, suggestions and ideas into human minds and masquerades them as coming from the souls themselves. He camouflages lies and untruths in goodness and presents them as truths. He has no real power to drag souls to hell but he can lead a soul to sin and fall away from God through cunning temptation. He is intelligent and targets strategically at the weak areas of souls. St Peter warns us in clear language: *Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour* (1 Peter 5:8).

To the prideful, Satan plants thoughts that focus on the self and self interest. *What is in it for me? Why should I do it? It's none of my business. It is my own body and I should be able to do whatever I want with it.* Satan camouflages selfish thoughts on false precepts of rights and freedom. The result is putting one's interest on top of the needs of others. To those weak in charity, Satan encourages judgemental thoughts, prejudices, grudges, unforgiveness and hatred. In these, Satan will magnify the faults and failings of others, producing unloving and negative perception of others, leading to intolerance and outright conflict.

To the fearful Satan encourages anxieties, worries and phobias. Satan knows that God's graces are given to deal only with the present moment. So he tries to pull the soul into the past or future so that the soul is unable to live fully in the present moment. He encourages dwelling on past failings and unforgiveness of self and others. Even though past sins were confessed and repented of, Satan still tries to cause doubt and regret, weakening the soul's faith in God. Once God forgives us our sins He remembers them no more (cf. Hebrews 10:17). Having a deep understanding of God's love, power and Scripture is a great tool against evil suggestions of the mind. Satan is effectively defeated when we can counter his evil suggestions with an appropriate quote from Scripture. This is what Jesus did when He was tempted in the desert. Jesus said to Satan: "It is written..."

Satan tries to bring discouragement to everyone. He tries to persuade us through our minds that it is no use trying to be good or grow closer to God because we will fall again and again anyway. He tells us we are not worthy of God's love and that God will never forgive us of our sins. Many people stayed away from God because of this lie taken for truth. Satan tells us that we have all the time in the world to correct the wrongs in our life and to grow closer to God. Jesus tells us differently that He will come unexpectedly like a thief in the middle of the night (cf. Matthew 24:42-44).

Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, I consecrate my mind and my heart to You. Purify my mind of anything which opposes holy truth, and flood it with Your light, Your Truth, wisdom, knowledge and understanding. Purify my heart and fill it with holy and divine love. Give me Your light of truth so that I can discern the difference between good and evil. Help me recognise the unsavoury fruits of Satan's handiwork: unloving thoughts and actions towards others, error and confusion in thinking, discouragement, loss of faith, lack of inner peace and sins. Demolish every argument and pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and take captive every thought to make it obedient to Yourself, the Eternal Truth (cf. 2 Corinthians 10:5). Mary, Seat of Wisdom, pray for me. Thank You Jesus. Praise You, Jesus. www.twohearts.hk