

Scripture Reading

A Reading of the Gospel According to Matthew (*Matthew 5:8*)

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection – Seeing Others through the Eyes of Jesus

Love for God is transmitted into love for others. *Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. (1 John 4:20).* This is an eminently useful reminder from St. John, the beloved apostle of Jesus. We profess to love God. However, oftentimes our behaviour towards those around us is unloving because we forget the presence of God in others. No matter how great a sinner is, as long as he/she is alive, God's Spirit is present in him/her. How much we can recognise the presence of God in others depends on the degree of purity of our hearts.

Self-Centredness and pride blind the eyes of the heart. A proud heart sees competition and rivalry in others where none maybe present. A proud heart perceives humiliation and encroachment on its rights when none maybe intended. A proud heart is myopic, busies itself with self comfort and advancement, nurses itself over perceived injuries but fails to see the plight and suffering of others. A proud heart is concerned chiefly with itself, and has not much concern for others.

They missed the Visitation. When Jesus, Son of the Eternal Father took flesh and came in the form of a humble and lowly man, few people recognized Him. The self-righteous religious authorities of the Jews who were expected to lead the people in welcoming the true Messiah made the terrible mistake of missing the Visitation, charting the historical course of the first chosen people of God into dark waters of confusion and strife instead of living a new life of joy with the fulfillment of the promised coming of the Messiah from among their own kind. Instead, blinded by jealousy and pride, they planned to kill Him. How the whole nation suffered as a result even to this day!

The presence of God can be recognized by the lowly and simple of heart. When Jesus asked Peter who he thought Jesus was, the simple fisherman answered, *“You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” (Matthew 16:16).* Truth was not lost on the simple of heart. The response of Jesus to this confession of Peter was astounding. Jesus made St. Peter the head of His Church on earth. Why did Jesus choose Peter, the one who denied Him three times in public to head His Church? Jesus could read the heart of Peter. Despite his weaknesses, St. Peter had a great love for Jesus. He was the first to defend Jesus in the Garden of Olives when a group of soldiers came to arrest Jesus. He was also the only one to jump into stormy waters to get to Jesus while the others remained in the safety of the boat. He was the first to reach the tomb of Jesus and to enter it without any hesitation. The Church is a key instrument of God's love; and holy love must be the criteria by which it is to be led. True love engenders holy boldness necessary for true leadership.

Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, have mercy upon me for I am weak and proud. Purify my mind of all falsehood, and my opinions and convictions that are not in line with Your truth. Shine the divine light of Your truth into my mind so that I may see the truth with clarity, and rid me of the wrong way of thinking. Help me to be humble, always holding dear in my heart the loving, selfless sacrifice You made for me on Calvary. Purify my heart and fill it with divine love. Teach me to love You by seeing others through Your eyes. Help me recognise their untold needs, silent cries for help, their helplessness and emptiness while maintaining the external appearance of normalcy. Help me reach out to them through charity and sincere concern, forgetting about comfort of myself. Guard my mind with love so that it may never be judgemental of others. If I see faults in others, give me the charity to pray that the soul overcome these flaws. If these faults are serious and a big obstacle to their salvation, give me Your love to sacrifice for their conversion. In so doing, may I be Your heart, Your lips, Your eyes, Your hands, and Your feet. Jesus bless my holy desire as I consecrate to You my heart and mind so that You may use me as You will for the salvation of souls. Mary, meek and humble like Jesus, pray for me. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.