



Scripture Nugget – We are called to live the Passion of Christ

Then Jesus said to His disciples, “Whoever wishes to come after Me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me (Matthew 16:24).

Fulfilling God’s will in difficult situations – the embrace of our crosses. A lifelong lesson which everyone is learning is the acceptance of the hard truth that life does not revolve around ourselves but around Christ Who is the Way, the Truth and the Life (cf. John 14:6) and to Whom is given all authority in heaven and on earth (cf. Mt 28:18). When we are able to grasp this truth, our lives will be more abundant and joyful. Our fallen sinful human nature seeks gratification of selfish desires and passions leading to sin and condemnation, against the desires of the Holy Spirit within us. Thus, we can only fulfill God’s will with the supernatural help from God’s grace which is open to all. On the Thursday night before His arrest, Jesus had a great internal struggle with the mission He was entrusted with. Tasked with the drinking of the most bitter chalice in the whole of universe, Jesus prayed to the Heavenly Father not once but three times for His will be done: *“My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet, not as I will, but as You will”* (Matthew 26:39). Instead of avoiding the difficult situation we have on hand, we should face it squarely and pray for God’s help with the blessed assurance that Christ, having faced similar trials (cf. Hebrews 5:8-9) will provide the necessary grace.

Taking persecution peacefully and without retaliation. *Though harshly treated, He submitted and did not open His mouth; like a lamb led to slaughter or a sheep silent before shearers, He did not open His mouth (Isaiah 53:7).* A virtue which Jesus really desires us to develop is humility (cf. Matthew 11:29). Without humility, it is hard to have strong self-control and to remain peaceful in the face of provocation and persecution. Jesus broke the bondage of human pride when He submitted to humiliation especially during the crowning of thorns. *Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven (Matthew 5:10-12).* The eighth beatitude is the longest and carries a double reward. Blessed indeed are we if we have the courage to imitate Christ when persecuted!

Conversation with Jesus: Precious Lord, You call us to share and live Your Passion in our daily lives by walking in Your footsteps, embracing the crosses You sent us. The Cross on Calvary is Your stepping stone to joy. You endured the shame of the cross and focused instead on the joy it will bring (cf. Hebrews 12:2). My cross is also the route to joy and glory which You will share with me. *But we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are called, Jews and Greeks alike, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God (1 Corinthians 1:23-24).* Help me cling to Your teachings and gracefully accept all the sufferings that God allows to come my way. Through the acceptance of my crosses, power and wisdom will be provided to me in order that I can fulfill God’s will and glorify Him. United to Your Passion, I offer to You all my sufferings for the reparation of all sins especially my own. Make of me a good instrument in Your Hand to save many souls, and that I may be worthy to carry Your Name. Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for me. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.