

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the Gospel according to John (John 15:15)

I no longer call you slaves, because a slave does not know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from My Father. The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection – Becoming true friends of God

Developing our relationship with God. A closer and loving relationship with God will not happen by chance. We must decide for it and work sincerely towards it. God yearns for it, our soul hungers for it. Once we enjoy the grace of a loving, intimate relationship with God, we will find within our reach peace and security that no amount of worldly treasures or human love can bring. Our lives will not be immune from pain or suffering but whatever trials or adversities God may send us, they will not overcome us. Our lives will not be driven by the passion of our feelings, or selfish desires or the meaningless dictates of the world. Instead, as children of the Most High and true friends of God, and freed from bondage to this earth, our hopes are indestructible in Christ and our sights are set not on this passing world but on the glorious world to come.

Courageous, committed filial obedience to God is the first step towards true friendship. *You are My friends if you do what I command you (John 15:14).* Far from trying to be a dictator, Jesus explains that our joy will be complete if we remain in His love and that can only happen if we keep His commandments (cf. John 15:10-11). All the great friends of God were outstanding in their obedience to God even at the risk of their own lives. Obedience is solid proof of our love for God. *This is My commandment: love one another as I love you (John 15:12).* God usually does not ask us for great sacrifices but He commands us to obey His commandments. God's Ten Commandments received by Abraham on our behalf were cast in stone signifying God does not want us to tamper with His commandments with excuses like it being too rigid for our tastes, out of tune with the times or running counter against our culture (cf. Mark 7:8, Matthew 15:9). God provides all the graces needed to adhere to His commandments. It is only through obedience to God's commandments that we can walk on the true path to our glorious, eternal inheritance. Thus, God asks us to love His commandments more than pure gold (cf. Psalm 119:127).

A true friend of God loves what He loves and hates what He hates. As a most loving Father, God's greatest desire and concern is the eternal salvation of all His children. For this sole reason, God bore the great sacrifice of sending His only Begotten Son Jesus as a sacrificial offering for the atonement for all our sins. In love and in truth, God will do anything within His justice to bring salvation to all His children. In our Baptism, God gives every one of us a role in His plan to save the world. When we start caring passionately about the welfare especially the eternal salvation of those around us and hating the evil and sin that are present everywhere, we begin thinking like God. When His passion becomes ours, God will use us as instruments to bring His Kingdom closer to earth. The battle for God's Kingdom is in the minds and hearts of souls. Every prayer and sacrifice offered to God in love, every temptation courageously overcome, every heart opened in humility to accept God's mercy, every act done in love for God's glory, every act of obedience and trust in God are all victories gained for God's Kingdom. God's Kingdom is gained through love.

A true friend of God is an ardent lover of the Holy Eucharist. *The Holy Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life (CCC 1324).* In the Eucharist is the Real Presence of Jesus Christ: Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity – the whole Christ, the same Christ that walked on the shore of the Sea of Galilee and the same Christ that died on Calvary. When God made such an act of love in the institution of the Holy Eucharist during the Last Supper, true friends of God are compelled to respond in like manner: with utmost love and reverence for the Eucharist which can be externalized through the way we behave during Holy Mass, prepare for and receive Holy Communion, the time we spent in Eucharistic Adoration or in keeping Jesus company in the holy Tabernacle. Our love for the Holy Eucharist will lead us make reparation for Masses half-heartedly attended, Communions made in a state of tepidity and the sacrileges, indifference and outrages committed against the Holy Eucharist.

Conversation with Jesus: Precious Lord, thank You for offering me Your friendship even though I am not worthy. Embrace my heart close to Yours. Fill my soul with a deep and abiding love for You and all that You represent. I offer to You my life and my will. Take my heart and give me Yours. Help me find my delight in You as You delight in me. For You are my Joy, my Desire, my Life, my Purpose, My friend. Place the will to accomplish Your purpose in my heart till the day when Your glory is fully revealed to all nations. Grant that I may do everything for the greater glory of God and give me the graces to bring many souls to You. Help me cast all my worries and fears upon You, trusting You as a true friend. Give me a true devotion to Mary as she is my short cut to You. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus. www.twohearts.hk