

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the First Letter of John (1 John 3:1, 3)

See what love the Father has bestowed on us that we may be called the children of God. Yet so we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know Him. Everyone who has this hope based on Him makes himself pure, as He is pure. The Word of the Lord. R. Thanks be to God.

Reflection – Clinging to my true identity that lasts for eternity

How we identify ourselves is important as it can define the way we think and behave. St. Paul always started his letters to the faith communities he set up by addressing himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ. St Paul clung tenaciously to this identity. He knew apostleship of Christ was a precious gift to him from God, with which is accompanied divine authority over the faith communities and the mission of spreading the good news of Jesus Christ. Always conscious that he was an apostle of Christ, St Paul was most zealous in his mission. St Paul accomplished his mission very well. He earned his unfading crown of glory through his perseverance through many hardships like betrayal, caning, stoning, imprisonment, shipwrecks, sleeplessness, hunger, martyrdom.

‘Son of Man’ is Jesus’ favorite title when referring to Himself. ‘Son of Man’ is a reference to the humanity of Jesus Who is God at all times. God called Prophet Ezekiel “Son of Man” many times as recorded in Scripture. Here, it simply means “man”, a human being. However, for Jesus, it was more than a simple reference to His humanity. In Scripture, “Son of Man” is a messianic title which appeared in Daniel 7:13-14: *As the visions during the night continued, I saw coming with the clouds of heaven One like a son of man. When He reached the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him, He received dominion, splendor, and kingship; all nations, peoples and tongues will serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away, His kingship, one that shall not be destroyed.* Like St Paul, Jesus was consumed by His mission. He is the promised Messiah. He thinks like the Messiah. He acts like the Messiah. He identifies Himself as the Messiah. *Jesus said to them: “My food is to do the will of the One Who sent Me and to finish His work (John 4:34).* Jesus lives to do the Father’s will and to accomplish the mission given to Him by the Father. Jesus identifies Himself accordingly.

Becoming Children of God. *But to those who did accept Him He gave power to become children of God, to those who believe in His Name, who were born not by natural generation nor by human choice nor by a man’s decision but of God (John 1:12-13).* God bestows the priceless gift of membership of His family as sons and daughters to anyone who accepts Jesus Christ as one’s personal Saviour. Revealing His infinite mercy and love, God intended to adopt us through Jesus Christ into His family even before Creation (cf. *Ephesians 1:4-5*). This is how great God’s plan is for each and every one of us! Invitation to become His children is extended to all people. No one is excluded (cf. *Romans 9:25-26*). It is the Holy Spirit that revealed to us, the believers that we are children of God, calling out “Abba, Father!” (cf. *Romans 8:15, Galatians 4:6*).

Maturing into Children of God. St Paul gives us a great lesson on how to mature in our faith (cf. *Ephesians 4:11-24*). We are to abandon our former way of thinking and living. We are to be constantly renewed in our mind and spirit, and put on the new self created in God’s righteousness and truth. We have been given gifts and graces for different roles to build up our faith and that of our faith communities, the Body of Christ. In the maturity of our faith, we will not be swept along by false ideologies that may be perpetrated by those that are not from God but with evil intent. Through our faith in Jesus Christ, we will live in the holiness of His Truth with love. *Rather, living the truth in love, we should grow in every way into Him who is the Head, Christ (Ephesians 4:15).* As children of God, we are to be led by the Holy Spirit and not by our sinful nature. *For if you live according to the flesh, you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God (Romans 8:13-14).*

Conversation with Jesus: Precious Lord, thank You for the priceless gift of membership of God’s family through Your Precious Blood shed on the Cross. Yes, I am now a child of the Most High! In this earthly pilgrimage I have different identities in accordance with the different roles I play. All these identities will fall away when my earthly life is over, but I will forever be a child of God! No one can take this great dignity and privilege away from me. With You, we are all co-heirs to God’s Kingdom! I will share Your glory in Your Kingdom where gladness never ceases! Anoint me with Your Spirit and give me all the graces I need to heed His gentle inspirations as He works on the sanctification of my soul. Help me always treasure and be in awe of my dignity and identity as a child of the Most High. Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for me that I may be made worthy of the promises of Your Son. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus. www.twohearts.hk