

Scripture Reading

A Reading of the First Letter of Peter (1 Peter 2: 21-23)

To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in His steps. "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in His mouth." When they hurled their insults at Him, He did not retaliate; when He suffered, He made no threats. Instead, He entrusted Himself to Him who judges justly. The Word of the Lord.
R. Thanks be to God.

Reflection – Diminish the power of the Evil One by refusing to engage with him

Jesus is our supreme model on how to behave. When Jesus taught the common people, the crowds were amazed at His authority. Unlike the teachers of the law, Jesus taught with authority because He did so with love and sincerity with the objective of bringing everyone to heaven, and practised what He taught. On the other hand, the actions of the religious teachers did not correspond to what they taught. They were hypocritical and did not carry out what they prescribed for the common people (cf. Matthew 7:29).

Jesus was silent before His accusers. *Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, "Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?" But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer (Mark 14:60-61).* Out of hatred and jealousy, the chief priests and the whole of the Sanhedrin were looking for evidence so that they could put Jesus to death. Many false witnesses came forward, but their testimonies did not agree with each other as they were all false. Jesus was silent when confronted with false accusations. Why did Jesus remain silent at this point? Jesus could have silenced them with just a look and threw them into utter confusion. But Jesus embraced His cross and kept calmly silent, giving us an example of how to behave when we are confronted by furious accusers.

The false accusers were human agents of the Evil One. These poor souls through their pride and hatred of Jesus opened their souls to the evil spirits and became their evil instruments in inflicting as much harm as they could on Jesus. *For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms (Ephesians 6:12).* The power of the evil spirits is nothing compared to the power of Jesus, God's only Son. Bringing them down would have been a simple thing for Jesus to do. On the other hand, we, as mere human beings, are no match for the power of the evil spirits. Therefore, out of love, Jesus set an example. Jesus helps us recognize the work of the Evil One and his fallen angels who work through their human agents who are people who open their souls to evil through deep-seated pride, hatred and other unrepented, habitual sins.

Silence would let the raging fire die down and diminish the power of the Evil One. Jesus knew that whatever He might say in reply to their accusations, would bring more anger and be twisted to suit their evil agenda. So He refused to engage with these infested souls, giving them no further fuel by which to rage and rant. Silence in this situation was not an admission of guilt though it might seem so to the unenlightened onlookers. We see in many instances in which Jesus acted in a way that disregarded the adverse opinion of the people. Silence in this situation was also not a sign of timidity. It was a gesture of love for those who persecuted Him, a steadfast refusal to engage with the evil one as retaliation would cause more harm in the infested souls of the wicked people. It was to diminish the power of the evil one by refusing to engage with him, and to set an example on how to behave when we are confronted with angry accusers.

Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, when I am confronted by hatred or anger or false accusation, help me follow Your example by remaining in calm silence at that angry moment. I am in spiritual battle every moment of the day. Give me the gift of self-control so that I will not be tempted to retaliate which will increase the power of the evil one over me. For this, I need Your love and humility. Help me remember how You quietly submitted to Your cruel torturers on Calvary in order to bring true peace to mankind. Let the recalling of Your Passion strengthen me in every difficult situation. Help me remember it is only love that can overcome evil. Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for me. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.