

## Scripture Reading

### A Reading from the Book of Proverbs (Proverbs 4:23)

Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it. The Word of the Lord. R. Thanks be to God.

### Reflection ~ Jesus comes in simplicity to speak to the simplicity of our hearts

**In simplicity and hiddenness Jesus came into the world as a little, vulnerable baby during the first Christmas.** The first coming of Jesus into the world was very much a quiet and hidden event. Though as Son of Almighty God, Jesus rightly deserves all the love, honour and glory that the whole world can summon for His entry into the world, He was borne of poor, simple parents. Instead of a gilded palace, Jesus was born in a cold stable with only the breath of a donkey to warm His little vulnerable Body. Thus, Jesus sanctifies the simple life and blesses the trusting poor with the promise of God's Kingdom. *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:3).*

**Jesus chose the simple people to proclaim His birth and presence into the world.** When a child is born into a royal household, the good news is proclaimed to the whole world by an eager media, broadcasting the news far and wide as befitting royalty. God's ways are different. Though Jesus is King of kings, the greatness and magnanimity of His incarnate birth was proclaimed by poor simple shepherds who were working in the cold field that night when Jesus was born. When the time came for Baby Jesus to be presented to the world, God appointed two unknown and unimportant persons to be in the temple when Baby Jesus was brought in to be consecrated to God the Father. Simeon was a holy elderly priest. Anna was an elderly widow who spent her days in the temple, praying and fasting. Both had prayed deeply for the coming of the Messiah, and were given the gift of recognizing Him when He came in the form of a little baby.

**Jesus chose the simple-hearted to be His Apostles.** Jesus chooses to be identified with the simple and lowly. Before He began His public ministry Jesus helped out in St. Joseph's workshop as a carpenter. His apostles were carefully chosen after deep prayer to God, His Father. They were mostly poor and simple fishermen. They were uneducated, unlearned in Scripture and held no important positions in the religious community. Yet they were chosen for the highest mission: to help Jesus save souls.

**Jesus teaches divine truths in a simple way without riding on the approvals and endorsement of the Jewish religious authorities.** The religious authorities of the Jews felt threatened and were jealous of Jesus. Jesus was able to draw the common people to Him by His simplicity, sincerity, love and compassion. He reduces the hundreds of Jewish religious laws to two simple laws of love (the embodiment of the Ten Commandments): Firstly, love God above all else. Secondly, love others as we would love ourselves. It was a simple language everyone can easily understand. *The people were amazed at His teaching, because He taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law (Mark 1:22).*

**Jesus shows His love in a simple way that everyone can understand.** Jesus teaches with authority because He practises what He teaches. Through the way He lives, Jesus teaches us how we should live – simply and for God. Through His deep and constant prayer to God, His Father, Jesus teaches us how important it is that we pray deeply and put ourselves often in the presence of God. Through the way Jesus endures His sufferings, Jesus teaches us the value of patience, trust in and abandonment to God's holy will. Through His shameful and agonizing death on the cross, Jesus teaches us how far we should go in loving God and others.

### Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, free my heart of all unholy attachments that keep me from having a simple heart. Purify my heart of all concerns and interest in vainless things that have no bearing on my salvation and that of others around me, but which drain my time, resources and energy. Teach me simplicity in the way I live my daily life, in the way I think, in my faith in You. Give me the wisdom to disdain the passing things of this world and treasure the things that are of eternal value. May I always put You first in my life so that my life will be simple, uncluttered and peaceful. In so doing, I claim Your promise that all other things that I need will be provided to me (cf. Matthew 6:33). Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for me. Thank You Jesus. Praise You Jesus.