

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the Gospel according to Luke (*Luke 12:51-53*)

Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division. From now on there will be five in one family divided against each other, three against two and two against three. They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law. The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection – Know and Remain in the Truth by Adhering to Christ’s Teachings

God is the absolute, unchanging Truth. *Jesus says: I am the way, the truth and the life (cf. John 14:6).* Divine teachings and divine values are absolute and unchanging. They do not bend to winds of popular thought or opinion. The reality of the existence of God and His teachings debunk the idea of relativism, a way of thinking that states that there is no such thing as absolutely good or absolutely bad, but that everything depends on how you look at it. Such a false way of thinking denies the existence of absolute truths, corrupts the morality of the human conscience, excuses acts of sin and evil deeds, and creates a great gulf between God and His children. Most of all, it endangers the salvation of God’s children if they fall prey to such deceit.

Truth divides because not all are willing to open their hearts to the Truth. Even a small family can be divided between its members because not all is willing to accept the truth which is found in Christ and His teachings. Acceptance of the truth requires a change of heart which is hardened by unrepented sins. Some people do not wish to accept Christ because they are afraid of the change they need to make in their lives. They thought that they would walk a different route to God not knowing that Christ is the only way (cf. John 14:6). In Scripture, a hardened heart is also referred to as a stiff neck which resists the action of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth in Whom we live, move and have our being (cf. Acts 17:28), has been given to everyone, and imparts His holy inspirations in a gentle voice which can be easily drowned out by the strident voice of our feelings, passions, desires and ego which being led by the flesh, are opposed to the Spirit.

Truth is very close to us. Pilate asked Jesus: "What is truth?" (cf. John 18:38). Standing in front of Jesus, the Truth itself, Pilate in his ignorance and sinfulness asked the insolent question. The heart and mind of Pilate reflect the same situation of the human condition today – blindness to the Truth even when it is so close to us. Yes, God is very close to us even though our false feelings may tell us otherwise. The Holy Spirit is present in everyone to guide everyone through His holy inspirations. More so than a caring parent, God remains actively concerned about the minute details of our everyday life. Even the number of hairs on our heads is noted by God (cf. Matthew 10:30). *This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil (John 3:19).* The misdeed of Pilate serves as a good warning to us that although God is very close, we can still be blind to His presence through our pride and sinfulness.

Only by adhering to Christ’s teachings, can we remain in the Truth. We have to remain in the truth for it is the truth that will set us free from our sins. *To the Jews who had believed Him, Jesus said, “If you hold to My teaching, you are really My disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” (John 8:31-32).* We will know the Truth only if we adhere to Christ and His teachings. The world in its godlessness and self-love, is inclined to promote and glamorize falsehoods as truths but we should not allow it to influence our thinking for we, as disciples of Christ, possess the truth. Christ’s whole life on earth is a solid testament of His divine teachings – His absolute obedience to God’s will, His life of sacrifice, love and selflessness. To adhere to His teachings is to walk in His footsteps.

Conversation with Jesus: Precious Lord, You are the Eternal Truth, the truth that will set us free from our sins. Please open all eyes to see the truth of God’s love, and the truth of Your dying on the Cross to ransom every sinner on the face of this earth. Please open all hearts to accept God’s love, Your promise of salvation and an abundance of graces. Remove the cloud of deception Satan has placed over the heart of the world. Let Your divine will which is based on holy love be made known to all. Strengthen all hearts in holy love and humility so that all can accept Your teachings and live in the truth. Bestow discernment, a gift of the Holy Spirit, on all sinners so that we will always reject falsehoods presented to us as truths. Give all Your disciples the courage to always stand up for the Truth of Your holy Word. Mary, Mother of Salvation, be our Advocate. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus. www.twohearts.hk