

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the Gospel according to John (John 14:15)

“If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.” The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection – The Power of Holy Obedience

The best proof of our love for God is our adherence to His commandments and fulfillment of His will. God’s teachings are clear and easily understood. We are to prove our love for Him by keeping His commandments. God did not ask us to climb the highest mountain, or dive to the deepest depth, or perform strenuous sacrifices, etc. but simply to keep His commandments. The maturity of our faith will lead us to understand that God’s commandments are the roads that will lead us to the eternal, glorious inheritance God has planned in advance for each of His children. *Truly I love Your commands more than the finest gold. Thus I follow all Your precepts; every wrong way I hate. Wonderful are Your decrees; therefore I observe them (Psalm 119:127-129).* Thus, God tells us we should love His commandments more than the finest gold.

The power of Abraham’s holy obedience to God. God asked Abraham to sacrifice Isaac to Him as a burnt offering (cf. Genesis 22:2). There were few people who were put to such great test by God. Isaac was Abraham’s only legitimate son of his old age and also the son through whom God has promised to produce numerous descendants for Abraham. From the human perspective, God’s command to Abraham was clearly confusing. Firstly, it was a violation of God’s sixth commandment. Secondly, what is the use of the promise if Isaac was going to die? However, Abraham’s faith and trust in God put his human thinking, feelings and concerns below filial obedience to God. Abraham understood God is God, not man and is above all, even His commandments. Abraham hastened to carry out God’s seemingly cruel command. In his human thinking, Abraham supposed God has the power to resurrect Isaac from the dead to fulfill His promise. However, God merely wanted him to prove his obedience and unshakeable trust. When he hastened to obey God’s command to sacrifice Isaac, he glorified God to a very high degree. Through this supreme act of obedience, all his descendants, including us who are spiritual descendants of Abraham through faith (cf. Galatians 3:29), are blessed. Abraham’s sacrifice is also a parallel of God’s own saving action in sending Jesus to us. Abraham did not spare his son from God. God did not spare His Son from us (cf. John 3:16).

The power of Blessed Mother Mary’s holy obedience to God. When Angel Gabriel requested Mary to be the mother of the Saviour, Mary’s reaction was how this could be possible since she was a virgin. Mary’s reaction was not a concern for her own safety even though she knew that an unwed mother in those days would be stoned to death. When Angel Gabriel explained to her that the power of the Holy Spirit will cause the Baby to be conceived in her womb, she immediately said “yes” to the request. Later on, when St Joseph found out about her pregnancy, Mary was trustful enough to refrain from defending herself. As a result, God spoke mightily on her behalf through a dream given to St Joseph. Through her unquestioning obedience and trust in God, Mary allowed herself to be used mightily for God’s purpose. Acknowledging Mary’s unique role in the salvation plan of God, Mary has been justly called by those who love her “Co-Redemptrix”. Faithful to God to the very last, Mary stood at the foot of the Cross on Calvary and offered up her crucified Son to God as atonement for all sins.

The power of the holy obedience of Daniel and his friends. Daniel and his friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were thrown into a fiery furnace for refusing to bow down to the golden statue set up by Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar (cf. Daniel 3). The furnace was heated up to such a high temperature that even the men who threw Daniel and his friends into the furnace were consumed by the blazing fire but Daniel and his friends remained unharmed. They said to the king: *If our God, Whom we serve, can save us from the white-hot furnace and from your hands, O king, may He save us! But even if He will not, you should know, O king, that we will not serve your god or worship the golden statue which you set up.* (Daniel 3:17-18). Even if God would not exercise His power to save them, they would still be faithful to God even at the expense of their lives.

Conversation with Jesus: Precious Lord, through Your obedience to the Heavenly Father in accepting a human body for the purpose of suffering and death for our salvation, You provide us with the best example of filial obedience and trust in the Heavenly Father. God raised up numerous heroes of our faith (cf. Hebrews 11) to show us that when we depend on God and not on ourselves, we are able to achieve the humanly impossible which glories God. These heroes were not sinless or perfect people but they had one common characteristic. They loved God with their whole heart, and were firmly committed to filial obedience to God even in the face of adversity. Through them, God received the glory that is rightfully His. Give me all the graces to love God truly with my whole heart so that I will always keep His commandments and remain true to the Truth. Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for me. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus. www.twohearts.hk