

## Scripture Reading

### **A Reading from the Gospel according to Matthew (Matthew 28:18-20)**

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

### **Reflection ~ The Sacraments continue mightily the saving mission of Christ**

**The Sacraments continue mightily the saving mission of Christ.** We are saved by grace which is a free gift from God. No one can save oneself with good works alone if one has no faith in Jesus Christ since without faith it is impossible to please God (cf. Hebrews 11:6) and salvation is a free gift from God (cf. Ephesians 2:8-9). Through His Passion, Jesus merited for us all the graces we need for salvation (cf. Romans 3:23-24). *'Seated at the right hand of the Father' and pouring out the Holy Spirit on His Body which is the Church, Christ now acts through the Sacraments He instituted to communicate His grace (CCC 1084).* Unlike other legendary figures in history whose actions died with them, Christ's saving action in the Paschal mystery - the events of the Cross and resurrection - participates in divine eternity, and so transcends all times while being made present in them all (cf. CCC 1085). Christ's saving action lives on today to give us the graces needed for sanctification and salvation.

**The Sacraments of salvation are instituted by Christ Himself for His Church and by His Church.** *The Sacraments are efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us (CCC 1131).* The seven Sacraments of the Catholic Church are Baptism, Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation (Confession), Holy Communion, Confirmation, Holy Orders, Holy Matrimony, and Anointing of the Sick. Scripture tells us Christ loves His Church, His Spouse and gives Himself up for her, that He might sanctify her, and having cleansed her He might present the Church to Himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish (cf. Ephesians 5:25-27). To prepare His Spouse for a time of eternity with Him, Christ's key action in this mission is through the Holy Sacraments through which He makes His actions and Presence alive to the members of His Church. The Sacraments are the masterworks of God in the new and everlasting covenant (cf. CCC 1116).

**The Sacraments are prefigured in the Old Testament.** Christ said He did not come to abolish the Old Testament but to fulfill it (cf. Matthew 5:17). In the same vein, the actions of Christ in the New Covenant were prefigured in the Old Testament. For example, prefiguring of salvation through Baptism can be found in the waters overshadowed by the Holy Spirit during the time of creation (cf. Genesis 1:2), the great flood and Noah's ark in saving 8 persons (cf. 1 Peter 3:20), the crossing of the Red Sea liberating Israel from slavery to Egypt announcing the liberation through Baptism, and the crossing of the River Jordan into the land promised to Abraham's descendants, an image of eternal life (cf. CCC 1217 - CCC 1222).

**Through the Sacraments we participate in the heavenly liturgy (cf. CCC 1139)!** Christ lives forever and He intercedes for us (cf. Hebrews 7:25). In the heavenly sanctuary (cf. Hebrews 8:2) with all the saints, angels, and Mother Mary, Jesus the Lamb of God, is constantly interceding to God the Father. He is also the one high priest of the heavenly sanctuary, the one who offers and is offered, and who gives and is given (cf. CCC 1137). The holy sanctuaries in our churches on earth are but poor shadows of the heavenly sanctuary in heaven of which St John was given a vision (cf. Revelation 4). Though we are still on our earthly pilgrimage, God through His great love and power enables each of His children with new birth in Christ to participate in the grandeur of heavenly worship that will replace our poor earthly version once we reach our true home in heaven.

### **Conversation with Christ**

Precious Lord, Isaiah says of You: *As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts (Isaiah 55:9).* No one can imagine the hidden power You unleash when Your Church celebrates Your Sacraments of salvation. Though Your time in the flesh on earth is over, through the Sacraments You reach out mightily to everyone in Your Church and make present again the saving actions of Your Paschal mystery and Your divine Presence. It is You who baptize. It is You who absolve sins in the Confessional. It is You who bestow Your Spirit on the Confirmands. Open my heart whenever I celebrate Your Sacraments especially Confession and Holy Communion so that powerfully transformed by Your grace and divine Presence, I may be able to bring Your love and good news to those around me. Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for me. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus. [www.twohearts.hk](http://www.twohearts.hk)