

Scripture Reading

A Reading of the Letter of St Paul to the Colossians (Colossians 3:1-4)

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. The Word of the Lord. R. Thanks be to God.

Reflection – The Story of Any Conversion – Living a Sacramental life of Grace

We lock up our hearts by our pride and iniquity. Our pride and sins harden our hearts. The effects of Original Sin persist after Baptism. In the beginning, our first parents, Adam and Eve were created perfectly, and endowed with self-will. They were created in God's image with a capacity for love, intellect and self-will. Their heart, mind, body, soul and spirit were in internal harmony with the everlasting divine will of God which is God's manifestation of His divine love for us. The internal harmony was thrown into disarray when they committed the first sin of disobedience to God when they fell under the temptation by the ancient serpent to become like God. The human mind became darkened and no longer filled with God's wisdom. The human heart no longer place love for God above all else but replaced it with self-love. The human body no longer was perfectly controlled by the mind and heart working in harmony. *For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do (Romans 7:15)*. Sin and weaknesses set in, opening the entire person to all kinds of disabilities and diseases.

Regaining mastery over self, restoring the internal order of harmony. Any story of conversion involves an attempt at putting the original internal order in place: putting God first in our heart and mind, in the little world we operate. We are not left to any doubt as to how to go about this. Jesus came to show us the way clearly. *Jesus said: "Whoever wants to be My disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow Me (Luke 9:23)*. Mortification and self-denial oblige us to control our senses: what we see, hear, feel, read, think, desire. An unprecedented level of impurity exists in our world now, and evil can enter our souls through our uncontrolled senses especially in the pursuit of sensual pleasures and titillation. Mortification of the intellect and mind involves submitting our way of thinking to the truths of our faith and putting on the mind of Christ (Cf. 1 Corinthians 2:16). Mortification of our heart obliges us to purify our heart of all that oppose and distrust holy love: hatred, unforgiveness, grudges, biases, anxieties, worries, unholy fears, etc.

Opening our heart to God in prayer. God, like an ever present loving parent, is always present to us. However, most of the time we forget the presence of God and fail to live in His presence, which makes it easier for us to fall into sin. When we pray, we conscientiously put ourselves in God's presence. Our hearts are open, we become more receptive of God's graces which are available at every present moment and adequate for us to overcome the difficulty in any present moment. *Where sin abounds, grace abounds much more (Romans 5:20)*. When God's graces are accepted, temptations are overcome, spiritual strength is given, our will to walk in the footsteps of Christ is strengthened, all our burdens are lighter and we have a greater measure of internal peace and harmony that the world cannot give.

A sacramental way of life, a fast route to holiness. All holiness consists in the love of God, and love of God consists in doing His holy will. We need all the divine help available to restore the divine order in our being: loving God foremost, then loving others for the sake of God. Through the Sacraments we receive sanctifying graces and actual graces in torrents that are not bestowed in such amount in other ways. For the baptized Catholic, the daily Holy Mass and Sacrament of Reconciliation should constitute the greatest source of graces available always and everywhere where there is a Catholic church.

Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, You came in the flesh to show me how to live, and to give me life abundantly. Through Your Cross, You teach me how not to live for myself, but for God and others. Through Your Sacraments You bestow Your graces in torrents that will help me to always walk on the true path to my heavenly home. Give me all the graces I need every day to work constantly on my conversion to a purer love for You. Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for me. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.