

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the Second Letter of St Paul to the Corinthians (2 Corinthians 3:18)

And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. The Word of the Lord. R. Thanks be to God.

Reflection ~ Through the Cross, we will be transformed with ever-increasing glory into His image

Jesus stepped into His glory when on the Cross He surrendered Himself into the Father's hands. *And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to Myself (John 12:32).* Jesus gave God the Father great glory when He ascended into Calvary and offered His death on the Cross for the redemption and salvation of all mankind in accordance with the divine will of the Heavenly Father. Through His atoning death offered up to the Father as a sacrifice for all sins, Jesus breaks the bondage of slavery to sin, and opens the gates of heaven for all of God's children who can accept God's love and mercy. The glory of God's Kingdom was restored when Jesus was obedient to the Father unto death.

For the joy set before Him, He endured the Cross, scorning its shame (cf. Hebrews 12:2). Jesus suffered the type of death reserved only for the worst of criminals in His time on earth. It was designed to inflict the highest degree of suffering and shame. It is extremely difficult for us to ever imagine how the Son of God can ever go through this inhuman process but Jesus did it so that we can share His joy in heaven. Through His suffering, Jesus gains for us eternal joy, and through His humiliation, eternal glory. No disciple is greater than its master. As Christ's disciples, we are called to walk in His footsteps. The suffering of Jesus gives deep meaning to human suffering. Human suffering accepted and united to His Passion will share the redemptive value of Christ's supreme Sacrifice on Calvary.

Our life is an accompaniment of Christ's ascent into Calvary. Jesus says: *"Whoever wants to be My disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow Me"* (cf. Luke 9:23, Matthew 16:24, Mark 8:34). It is impossible to follow Christ without the first step of denying ourselves: a daily process of overcoming our mindset, our way of thinking, our entrenched opinions, our selfish desires, our weak inclinations, focus on ourselves, our feelings, our passions that are led by the flesh and opposed to the Spirit. The Way of the Cross, our accompaniment of Christ on the walk to Calvary will be tough-going at times with the obstacles of pride and self-love most difficult to overcome. Nevertheless, it remains our only route to eternal glory. However, it will be more than worth the effort. St Paul tells us that we can never imagine what God plans in heaven for those who love Him (cf. 1 Corinthians 2:9). St Paul also says: *I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us (Romans 8:18).*

God promises that we will never be tried beyond our breaking point (1 Corinthians 10:13). Suffering exists because of sins, and God allows suffering for purification of souls. *As gold in the furnace, He proved them, and as sacrificial offerings He took them to Himself (Wisdom 3:16).* Through sufferings united to that of Christ, we are purified like gold in the furnace, preparing us and making us fit for our final destination in heaven. Because God is our Father and we are all connected by God's grace, our personal sufferings can be used by God for other souls as well. God loves everyone equally and it is His greatest desire that everyone is saved.

Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, You are the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. To bring many children of God to glory You willingly allow Yourself to suffer death on behalf of all, and thus made for a little while lower than the angels (cf. Hebrew 2:9-10). Though You are the only begotten Son of God and the Author of all Graces, You allow Yourself to endure the Passion and the Cross in order to be perfected on behalf of all imperfect, sinful children of God (cf. Hebrew 2:10). As our Saviour and Redeemer, You show the way to our eternal glory. We must climb together the same royal road to Calvary. We must be crucified together on the Cross on Calvary in order that we may die to ourselves and to sin, and to rise to a new life in You. In our eternal home we will be transformed with ever-increasing glory into Your image, with our faces unveiled. This is Your promise. Please give me the strength and graces to embrace all the crosses that You send into my life every day so that I can accompany You in the ascent to Calvary. Sufferings, pain and humiliation detach me from the world and its allurements, and bring me closer to Your Sacred Heart. Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for me. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.