

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the first Letter of John (1 John 1:7-9)

But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the Blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. The Word of the Lord. R. Thanks be to God.

Reflection – Why denial of sin is the worst thing on earth

It is through the Holy Spirit working in our conscience that we know the difference between right and wrong. *When He (the Holy Spirit) comes, He will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment (John 16:8).* It is the work of the Holy Spirit to convict the world of sin. However, through its godlessness and worshipping of self and other false gods, the heart of the world is mostly closed to the action of the Holy Spirit. As a result, what is evil and harmful is promoted as good and worth fighting for, while what is good and virtuous is mocked and not tolerated. Sin is not recognized as sin, and many unenlightened souls are on the road to destruction (cf. Matthew 7:13) as the wages of sin is death (cf. Romans 6:23).

Sin offends and hurts God, and separates us from the One who loves us the most. Jesus tells us that there is no greater love than laying down one's life for one's friend (cf. John 15:13). No one can love us the way God loves us. Our sins offend and hurt God because He has great love for us. Because of God's justice, sin has a very heavy price that only the Precious Blood of Jesus can pay. We should never trivialize sin or tolerate it in our souls. Nothing can separate us from God's love, except our sins. *But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear (Isaiah 59:2).* **Separation from God is the worst consequence of sin.** Nothing can be good for us if we are separated from God who is the source of our life and joy. Unrepented sins deprive us of the glorious eternal inheritance God has planned for each of us before the foundation of the world. When our soul is lost, no one grieves as greatly as God.

Sin makes us unhappy and unfulfilled, and adversely affects our world. Sin disturbs our inner harmony. Sin in our souls destroys our peace. We are made for God (cf. Colossians 1:16). Our true self is to be holy like God (cf. 1 Peter 1:6). Though our sinful self may not feel it, God is our true joy and deepest yearning. *My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God (Psalm 84:2).* Sin makes us lose the sanctifying grace (a sharing of the true life of God) in our souls. It is the sanctifying grace in our souls, which we receive through Baptism and the Sacraments, that makes us holy. Sin can even affect our health as it can bring diseases to the body. After Jesus healed the sick, paralyzed man at the Pool of Bethesda, He told the man to stop sinning or something worse may happen to him (cf. John 5:14).

Sin weakens and hinders us from doing the right things we want to do. *For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do - this I keep on doing (Romans 7:19).* Once we develop a careless attitude towards sin, taking our precious salvation for granted, we fail to recognize the many occasions of subtle temptation, and we commit sins without realizing it. We forget the gravity of sins and cannot feel remorse for our sins. As a result, we do not seek forgiveness from God as often as we should. *In their own eyes they flatter themselves too much to detect or hate their sin (Psalm 36:2).* A careless attitude towards sin and pride work together to blind us from discovering and acknowledging our hidden faults and sins. Spiritually weakened by unrepented sins, we find it difficult to overcome a bad habit, practise a virtue we want to emulate, move out of our comfort zone to transform ourselves, or to set higher standards in our spiritual life. Sin is the ugliest thing in the eyes of God. Unless we fight against sin constantly and courageously, we will be in bondage to complacency and mediocrity in our spiritual life instead of responding with alacrity to the call to holiness (cf. Matthew 5:48).

Conversation with Jesus: Precious Lord, You won salvation for each and every one of us through Your own blood, sweat, suffering and death on the Cross. It was my sins that put You on the Cross. May I never take my salvation for granted or trivialize sin. Through the agony of sweat and blood You endured in the Garden of Gethsemane, please bestow upon me and all sinners true remorse for our sins so that we can break free from the bondage due to sin. Through Your agonising death on the Cross, grant to me and all sinners a great detestation of sins which cause You suffering and put a gulf between us. Mary, the Sinless One of God, give us the grace and courage to wage heroically the battle against sin like true children of God before Whom sin has no place. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus. www.twohearts.hk