

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the Gospel according to Matthew (Matthew 20:28)

Just so, the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many. The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection – Jesus sets example on how to serve God

Emptying ourselves of our personal aspirations, preferences, desires, rights and entitlements. *Who, though He was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, He emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance (Philippians 2:6-7).* As the only begotten Son of God, instead of coming to earth to suffer and die, Jesus could have chosen to reign in glory and majesty in heaven. However, Jesus did not cling to His equality with God but instead stepped down from His throne, emptied Himself of glory and allowed Himself to be borne incarnate into the human race as decreed by God, the Father in His plan to redeem the fallen world. Very often, what God calls us to do could be something which does not fit in well with our personal aspirations, inclinations, gifts or talents. To respond to God's call, we have to empty ourselves like what Jesus did, so that we can be molded to take on the form of a servant of God like Jesus. What God needs most from us is not our human power or resources but a heart and mind that are open to Him, trustful of His ways and love His divine will above all else.

Withstanding rejection and persecution with patience. Jesus was rejected by the world from the very beginning. The world had no room for Him at the time of His birth into the human world. He was rejected by the very people He came to give His life for. The Jewish chief priests and elders plotted to kill Him, their long-awaited Messiah they could not recognize. *If you belonged to the world, the world would love its own; but because you do not belong to the world, and I have chosen you out of the world, the world hates you (John 15:19).* Rejection and hatred are from the Evil One who works within certain people to bring rejection to things that are of God and from God. We do not have to take it personally or feel discouraged.

Resisting temptation to place our own comfort and convenience first and garner glory for own self. Satan will never resist to tempt those who strive to answer God's calling. He will use our weaknesses and moments of weakness to tempt us. In the desert when Jesus was fasting and hungry, he tempted Jesus to turn the stones into bread. He will tempt us to place our own comfort and convenience before the concerns of God's Kingdom. Claiming that the fallen world belonged to him, Satan tempted Jesus to take a short cut to claiming back His Kingdom by falling down in adoration of him! He also tempted the humility of Jesus when he asked Jesus to throw Himself down from a great height to prove He is Son of God. Pride will always give us the inclination to garner glory for ourselves. The advice of St Paul is timely: Do everything for the glory of God (cf. 1 Corinthians 10:31), not for the sake of feeling good, or for proving to ourselves or to others, or for any other reason.

Persevering to the end by a life of consistent prayer, sacrifices and fidelity to God's will. A servant of God will not be able to persevere to the end if he/she does not hold fast to a life of solid prayer and sacrifices exemplified by Jesus. Though Son of the Most High, Who said: My Father and I are one (cf. Matthew 10:30), Jesus often escaped to a quiet place where He can pray by Himself to the Father. Before His public life, Jesus fasted for 40 days and nights in the desert. Jesus tells us that He was never alone because He always does the things that please His Father (cf. John 8:29). Knowing the fate that would befall Him in Jerusalem, and struggling with the resistance from His human nature, Jesus prayed fervently three times that God's will be done when He was in great distress in the Garden of Gethsemane on the night when He was arrested by the leaders of the Jewish people. *You will be hated by all because of My name. But the one who perseveres to the end will be saved (Mark 13:13).*

Conversation with Jesus: Precious Lord, You said that You did not come to earth to be served but to serve and give Your life as a ransom for many souls. You serve God and man by Your holy submission in obedience to Your earthly parents, Your suffering, pain, rejection, humiliation, torments, the shedding of Your Precious Blood, Your death on the Cross. You had no hesitation to step down and strip Yourself of the glory that was Yours as Son of the Most High. To serve God is to fulfill His holy will every day of my life. Give me the grace to discern His will for my life. Open my heart so that together with Mary, I can truly say "I am the servant of the Lord. May it be done to me according to Your Word." Transform my heart and mind so that serving God and fulfilling His will will become the mission of my life. In this way, through Your grace, I can attain the full potential of what You created me to be. For to serve You is the delight, joy and purpose of my soul. Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for me. May the most holy, divine will of God be exalted, loved and glorified above all forever and ever! Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.