

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the Book of Proverbs (Proverb 3:5-6)

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, on your own intelligence do not rely; In all your ways be mindful of Him, and He will make straight your paths. The Word of the Lord. R. Thanks be to God.

Reflection – Self-knowledge is a great blessing from God

Self-knowledge is knowing our nothingness and where we stand before God. *All have sinned and are deprived of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).* No one is holy in the sight of God with the exception of our Blessed Mother whom God is pleased to make her a perfect disciple, born with Immaculate Conception, a very special grace from God. As God made us for His grand purpose of adopting us as His children, He is constantly calling us to sanctification, the only road to walk to our true homeland where we can be our true selves. The Holy Spirit is in everyone with His light of truth shining into our every thought, desire, word and deed so that we can have the grace of self-knowledge to help us grow in sanctification.

The awareness of how our mind can enslave us. *On your intelligence do not rely (Proverb 3:5).* The human mind is a great battlefield where the Enemy of our salvation has ensnared many souls. Satan is not known as the Great Deceiver for no reason. His diabolical expertise is his cunning deception. Why are so many people indifferent to God and the eternal life that God promises? This is one of the unsavoury fruits of demonic deception. Being the Master Deceiver, he is able to dress up sin and evil as something attractive, noble and good to strive for like “human rights” and “freedom.” His first act of demonic deception in which he presented the forbidden fruit to Eve is being repeated every second of the day throughout the world in presenting lies and falsehoods to unsuspecting minds. He is currently the Prince of the World. He uses the powerful media with great aplomb to influence and corrupt human thinking. He likes to encourage the thinking that sin does not exist, or to trivialize it. He encourages the placing of self above others in the relentless pursuit of pleasure, riches, esteem and evil ambition. Leveraging on our pride and weakness, he introduces impure, accusing, unloving, judgemental, self-righteousness thoughts and evil intentions into our minds. We have to reject and throw out the trash that Satan introduced into our minds.

The awareness of how our heart can enslave us. *With all vigilance guard your heart, for in it are the sources of life (Proverbs 4:23).* The heart is the seat of human feelings which can potentially exert a powerful influence on our lives. Uncontrolled, it can lead a soul to lose the eternal life promised by Christ through His death on the Cross. Many examples on this abound. In the Old Testament, King Herod was so overcome by selfish fear of the new born king that he ordered the indiscriminate killing of many innocent baby boys. His son, Herod, the tetrarch beheaded John the Baptist because of his pride to keep a bad promise he made to his step-daughter. Unholy fear and pride arise out of disordered self-love. These negative emotions open the door to Satan who will enter to encourage a soul to do evil and/or weaken him/her from doing the right thing. Thus, St Paul reminds us: Be led not by our senses but by faith (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:7). We should discern the feelings that are born out of self-love and prevent it from having any influence on our behaviour or actions. Holy discipline of the heart is needed.

The awareness of our weaknesses and how we need to be constantly vigilant against temptation. *Be sober and vigilant. Your opponent the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8).* Human nature is weakened by sin, and as long as we live, we will have to deal with concupiscence of the flesh – an inclination to sin. Many times we will feel as St Paul declared, “I do not do the good I want, but I do the evil I do not want.” (cf. Romans 7:19). However, God’s grace is always available to us in the amount that is needed to overcome any temptation. *Where sin increased, grace overflowed all the more (Romans 5:20).* Thus, concupiscence may not be a totally bad thing, our weakened nature keeps us from self-complacency and makes us never forget to rely on God’s grace, the amazing power within us.

Conversation with Jesus: Precious Lord, fill my soul with Your Spirit of Truth. Let the light of truth shine in my mind and heart so that I may reject anything in my heart and mind that opposes holy truth. Purify my mind of all deception, falsehoods and wrong way of thinking. Fill my mind with holy wisdom and understanding. Purify my heart of pride, unholy fears, useless desires and anything which does not come from You. Fill it with holy love. Simplify my heart and humble my spirit. Let holy love and humility stand guard over my mind and heart. Help me subject my body to holy discipline so that I will be healthy and have the strength to do Your holy will. Give me the grace of self-knowledge so that I can have true repentance for all my sins and be more vigilant against temptation. Let there be no hidden, unacknowledged sin or darkness in my soul. Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for me. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus. www.twohearts.hk