

Scripture Reading

A Reading of the First Letter of St Paul to the Corinthians (*1 Corinthians 13:6-7*)

Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. The Word of the Lord. R. Thanks be to God.

Reflection – Our Trust in God is the Barometer of our Love for and Faith in Him

Faith in and love for God have to be proven to be true. Love for and faith in God are not mere sentiment. Jesus tells us clearly that the Kingdom of God is for those who do the will of God (Cf. Matthew 7:21). God tests those who love Him so as to strengthen their faith. *See, I have refined you, though not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction. For My own sake, for My own sake, I do this (Isaiah 48:10-11).* The greater the love for God the greater the test God sends to that person.

Jesus was put to the test. God the Father tested Jesus in a way that no other person will ever be subjected. Encumbered by our limited human mind and heart, we can never really understand the tremendous trust Jesus needs to place in His Father in order to carry out His Divine Will. But Jesus carries it out to perfection. God the Father shows His approval for everyone to witness. He declared for all to hear: *This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased* (Cf. Matthew 3:17). However, it was not easy for Jesus. In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus sweated blood in great fear, sorrow and anguish. Jesus places all His trust in God the Father from His incarnation to a complete sacrificial offering of Himself on the Cross on Calvary where He experienced the agony of the abandonment by the Heavenly Father who had to turn away (Cf. Matthew 27:46) so detestable are our sins to Him. *God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God* (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Mary was put to the test. During the Annunciation, Mary was given many wondrous promises for Jesus: that Jesus will be Son of God, a king whose reign will never end, that He will be great... (Cf. Luke 1: 32-33). Mary never saw the fulfilment of these promises in Her life but instead experienced the rejection of Jesus instead of acceptance, His humiliation instead of honour, and the crucifixion of Jesus instead of His glorification. Yet Mary stood unwavering by the Cross, passing all the testing with flying colours.

Abraham was put to the test. Abraham truly earned the title of Father of the faith. When he was asked by God to sacrifice Isaac, His only Son, Abraham never complained. His simple faith tells him that God knows what He is doing and that God could easily raise Isaac from the dead if He so wishes. God had earlier promised He would bless Abraham with countless descendants through Isaac.

He who trusts in himself is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom is kept safe (Proverbs 28:26). Common sense tells us two things are required to trust: will the person keep the promise and can the person keep the promise. Ultimately trust in a person depends on the extent of his/her love and power. Many would hesitate to trust others but have no hesitation to trust oneself. However, experience tells us once we place trust in ourselves or another human being, we should always be ready to forgive if, for some good or bad reason, we are let down.

Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, how You wish that my faith is strong and my love for You unwavering. And so You pass me through the furnace of affliction to purify and strengthen my faith in and love for You. You want me to know my greatest consolation in this valley of tears is trust in Your Divine Providence. Once I am able to abandon myself to You, then all my unholy fears and anxieties will fall off, and You can act in my life unencumbered. The road for me to walk is the Divine Will of the Father. Let me understand that only in God's will can I find real peace and security in this unpeaceful and dangerous world. Mary, Mother of Salvation and Protectress of our Faith, teach me to trust in Jesus, the Rock of total reliability. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus. www.twohearts.hk