

Scripture Reading

A Reading of the Book of Genesis (*Genesis 18:26-29*)

The Lord said, "If I find fifty righteous people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake." Then Abraham spoke up again: "Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, though I am nothing but dust and ashes, what if the number of the righteous is five less than fifty? Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five people?" "If I find forty-five there," He said, "I will not destroy it." Once again he spoke to Him, "What if only forty are found there?" He said, "For the sake of forty, I will not do it." The Word of the Lord. R. Thanks be to God.

Reflection – **Be A Receptacle of God's love and Mercy**

Mercy and love are synonymous. They are the same thing expressed differently and looked at from different angles. God is love (cf. 1 John 4:8). His love finds expression in His boundless mercy shown to His sinful creatures. In His merciful love, God created each human being in His image with a freewill like Himself and a soul that is eternal. God wants every person to be a part of His family (cf. Ephesians 1:5) and to share in His glory (cf. 2 Corinthians 3:18). When our first parents fell from grace and pulled down the whole human race, God in His mercy sent His only Beloved Son Jesus to be the expiation for our sins in satisfaction of His righteous justice. God looks upon His children with the attitude of a patient, caring, long-suffering parent who constantly calls out to guard them against their errant ways.

God wants to give His children His mercy but they would not open their hearts to receive it. *Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing (Matthew 23:37).* Which parent would not want the very best for her/his child? God more than the best of parents desires very much the eternal good for each person whom He has adopted through Jesus as His child. God wills everyone to be saved (cf. 1 Timothy 2:4). This is the most ardent desire of God for us.

Jesus said: "Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing." (Luke 23:34). *For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them (Matthew 13:15).* The unrelenting pursuit of selfish desires, pride and preoccupation with earthly pursuits, indifference to God and all that He stands for have weakened human hearts and minds, and leaves people operating on the earthly level. Their lives become one-dimensional, without the realisation that the more important part of their being is eternal. We come from God and our final destination is God, and in the meantime on a daily basis we need to renew our spiritual union with God through our personal prayer life and living a life that is founded on the teachings of Jesus Christ.

He (the Lord) answered, "For the sake of ten, I will not destroy it." (Genesis 18:32). Abraham in his great love for God interceded for mercy for the sinful city of Sodom. Though Abraham knew he was nothing before God, he persevered, pleaded and bargained with the Lord to save the city if there were as many as ten good persons in it. God let Himself be persuaded by Abraham, our father in faith who set a great example for us. With sins much more rampant today than in the time of the ancient city of Sodom, more than ever God needs many more persevering intercessors who can be receptacles of mercy for their families, societies, villages, towns, cities, nations, countries, the world. God patiently answered every request of Abraham as he pleaded to reduce the number of good people required to save the sinful city. In the same way, God too will listen to the cries from our hearts - prayers of intercession - to save souls as this prayer resonates with the deepest desire of His paternal heart, a heart that breaks each time a soul is lost to eternal damnation.

Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, my Advocate and great Intercessor, on the Cross You prayed: Father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing. I join my heartfelt prayer to Yours. United to Your Sacrifice in all the Masses said throughout the world, throughout all time, I offer to You my entire self, my will, my desires, everything I own, interior and exterior, my merits and even my sins on behalf of all sinners for the grace of salvation and protection for all sinners especially those who are deaf to Your calling and pleas. Expand my devotion to You so that I can feel Your love, Your presence and Your pain and bring more souls to You. Give me great zeal for Your Kingdom and transform me into a true disciple of Yours that is loyal, brave and steadfast. Mary, Protectress of the Faith, pray for me. Thank You Jesus. Praise You Jesus. www.twohearts.hk