

Scripture Reading

A Reading of the Gospel According to Luke (*Luke 2:15-20*)

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the Baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this Child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in Her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told. The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection – I Surrendered All to Come as a Baby in Your Midst

Jesus divested all His glory and made Himself nothing. (*Jesus*) *Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to His own advantage; rather, He made Himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness (Philippians 2:6-7).* Jesus is the Word of God made flesh. His Incarnation through birth as a baby boy of our Blessed Mother Mary was hardly recognised by the Jewish elders and religious teachers and experts as no one could have expected the tremendous personal sacrifice made by God, the Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus in the salvation of mankind. We do not deserve it but with God, everything is pure gift. He does not need to look at our worthiness or righteousness. Any righteousness or worthiness we have is from Him. The action of God is driven by pure love for His children.

Jesus surrenders His majesty and adoration of the heavenly court. In stepping down from His throne of glory in heaven, Jesus willingly and lovingly takes the nature of a servant, serving all in the highest sense of the word by dying for each and all so as to make available again the eternal inheritance prepared by God the Father for each and everyone of His children. Taking the lead from Jesus and opening our hearts to His graces, we let go of our selfish way of thinking, our prejudices, our pride and our self-centredness which distance us from God and close us up from His grace. Let our hearts take the attitude of desiring to serve God and others and not to be served.

Jesus is borne into poverty. Many unfortunate hearts do not have inner peace due to their attachment to the material world: money, comfortable lifestyle, power, fame, self, impure bodily desires, etc. Through His birth into poverty and living a simple life on earth, Jesus teaches us a convincing lesson on simplicity and freedom from attachment to the passing material world. We are not to be distracted by the passing glory of this world but to set our sights higher on the world whose glory never ends. Our soul is our most prized possession in our earthly life.

Jesus offered His Body as a sacrifice. Jesus was borne incarnate as a human baby so that He can suffer and die for us. Jesus suffered the maximum suffering that a human body can take (cf. St. Lawrence Justinian). For every grace we are given, Jesus earned it for us through His life, death and resurrection. Taking the hand of Jesus, we let go of our unholy fear of suffering which God may send us for our sanctification or that of others, pick up our cross and follow Him in His footsteps.

Jesus dies to give us an eternal life of grace. *I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full (John 10:10).* Jesus earned for us all the graces we need in order to free ourselves from bondage to any sin, no matter how serious. No matter how entrenched our sins maybe, God's mercy and love are stronger than any sin. *Where sin increased, grace increased all the more (Romans 5:20).* Jesus holds out an invitation of an eternal life of grace and joy to any repentant sinner who is willing to accept His love and mercy.

Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, Your most ardent desire this Christmas is to be able to take a rest in all human hearts. When this happens, it will be heaven on earth. How I wish Your desire is quickly fulfilled! I invite You to be reborn in my heart. For this, please purify and renew my heart and mind. I surrender to You my heart and mind. Enlighten me of all the dark areas in my mind. Help me let go of my selfish way of thinking and prejudices. Alert me to any untruths I may have accepted into my mind. Fill my mind with wisdom, knowledge and understanding. Purify my heart of self-pride, disorderly self-love and unholy fears. I resolve to forgive anyone who has offended me and to bless them in Your holy Name. Let Your Spirit pour holy love into my heart. Teach me practise humility and to walk in Your footsteps so that You can be reborn into my poor heart everyday, and each day will be a new Christmas for my soul. Mary, Protectress of our Faith, pray for me. Thank You Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.