

## Scripture Reading

### **A Reading from the Second Letter of Paul to the Thessalonians** (2 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. The Word of the Lord. R. Thanks be to God.

## Reflection ~ Our Mandate

**Pray continually (2 Thessalonians 5:17).** As God is above all, prayer is always the first step to everything. In prayer we submit ourselves to the divine authority of God. Sincere prayer opens our hearts to God, keeps us in touch with true reality of our existence in the whole scheme of God, enlightens us of our nothingness before God Who is our origin, guide and goal, and from Whom comes all our goodness. Without God in our lives we live in a false world, not in touch with true reality, opening our ourselves to false gods chiefly materialism and self. When our hearts are open in prayer, God softens our hearts and enlightens our minds though we may not feel it immediately. If pride and disorderly self love do not stand in the way, we receive from God all the graces we need to overcome whatever trials or temptations that may come our way in that day.

**Why prayer is so difficult at times.** Prayer is our lifeline to heaven. As such, there is always a spiritual struggle when it comes to prayer. Within ourselves, the struggle is ever present. Due to weakness arising from our sinful nature, our bodies crave the creature comforts and sensual pleasures that can lead to sin. On the other hand, our soul seeks restlessly the peace of its Creator. The two opposing objectives result in an internal struggle which becomes evident when a person seeks to pray – to come consciously into the presence of God. With self-control and self-denial, a person can have greater control over her/his lower appetites. Moreover, temptations against prayer come very often from outside. *For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms* (Ephesians 6:12). St Paul reminds us that our real enemies are not human but the evil spirits. They will try all tricks to stop us from praying. Being led by faith and not by feelings, we persevere in prayer though we may feel tired, disinterested and dry at times.

**Many are walking on the road to perdition (cf. Matthew 7:13).** We are living in a time of great apostasy. Many are increasingly distancing themselves from God because they do not make prayer part of their busy but empty lives which are filled with earthy pursuits which fail to satisfy their innermost needs. Many cannot lift their mind and spirit from the physical world in which they are in, thinking that there is nothing beyond their physical existence on earth. They either do not believe in God or they think God is not relevant in their lives, not realizing it was God who put them on this earth out of love and for His grand purpose. Making earthly goals the aim of their lives, their hearts and minds are not strong enough to seek out the truth of God's love and the glorious inheritance God plans for every one of His children.

**Call God's mercy upon everyone.** *I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people -for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness* (1 Timothy 2:1-2). Jesus said on the cross: *Father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing* (cf. Luke 23:34), imploring mercy for those who persecute Him. We need to continue Christ's prayer for mercy. God is love and His goodness in forgiving is unlimited. However, we need to seek forgiveness in order to be forgiven for our sins. To seek forgiveness we need to acknowledge our sinfulness. It is the Holy Spirit that convicts us of our sins, enabling us to seek forgiveness. For hearts closed to God, the action of the Holy Spirit is impaired, and the darkened soul continues in unrepented sins.

## Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, I come before You rejoicing that You are my personal Lord and Saviour. Because of what You have done for me, I will thank You all the days of my life. It is Your most ardent wish that every soul be saved. Through my baptism, You have given me a share in Your divine mission to save souls so that we can all be together in the Paradise God has created for each and every one of His children. I offer You my self-surrender, my entire life from my first heartbeat to my last and everything else in between, united to You in each Eucharistic liturgy celebrated throughout the world, throughout all time so that my entire life, sharing in Your infinite merits, may be a continual hymn of praise and prayer of supplication for souls. Let me share Your pain. Let me feel Your love. Increase my devotion to You so that I can bring more souls to You. Make me a prayer warrior for the Kingdom and bestow upon me the gift of conversion of those who come into contact with me. Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for me. Thank You Jesus. Praise You Jesus.