

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the Book of Psalms (Ps 70:4)

But may all who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; may those who long for Your saving help always say, "The Lord is great!" The Word of the Lord. R. Thanks be to God.

Reflection ~ Gratitude to God keeps our joy alive

Everyone wants to be thanked including God! On the way to Jerusalem, Jesus healed ten lepers. However, only one returned to thank Him. *Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?" (Luke 17:17).* Gratitude and thanksgiving keep the flow of gifts and goodwill flowing. When we give something to someone who received it with gratitude, we are encouraged to continue with generosity. It is the same with God who is so generous that He gave His only Son to us for our redemption. Having given His greatest gift, would God withhold other lesser gifts? (cf. Romans 8:32).

Gratitude to God puts us into God's presence by recalling His goodness and attributes. Though God is always with us as promised (cf. Matthew 28:20), we seldom remember this fact. As a result, fear and anxiety easily take hold of our hearts when we encounter some difficulties. When we put on the attitude of gratefulness in our heart, we take the time to thank God for all the things big and small that we take for granted daily. As we thank God for His goodness to us, our hearts are transported into His presence. We easily recall God's love, mercy, patience, faithfulness and ever ready forgiveness of our failings, sins and weaknesses. We lead more peaceful and secure lives.

Gratitude to God softens our hearts and keeps our pride in check. Our hearts are hardened by sins, pride and ingratitude. Unconsciously, we rely too much on ourselves and often attribute our achievements to our own sweat and blood. However, once our hearts take on the attitude of gratefulness, we remember with ease that we are ultimately dependent on God for all things, even our very breath and that without Him we can do nothing (cf. John 15:5). It keeps our pride that ever threatens to rule our hearts, in check. With humility we acknowledge God is in charge.

Gratitude to God lessens the pain of a tribulation and helps us overcome our problems. Once we start thanking God for the pain of a tribulation, the cross becomes a burden of love, and the most difficult moment is over. Thanking God for a tribulation acknowledges that God is in control, that whatever He wills to happen to us is ultimately for our good, especially eternal. It is borne out of a deep trust in God.

Praise of God drives away gloom and evil spirit. When we put on the garment of praise, many good things happen. God is praised as He rightly deserves. Evil is chased away. Praise by music was the sword King David used to deliver Saul from the evil spirit (1 Samuel 16:23). In the case of King Jehoshaphat, his military battle against his enemies was won by his men chanting praises to the Lord saying: "Give thanks to the Lord, for His love endures forever." (cf. 2 Chronicles 20:1-30).

Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, it is Your will that we thank You in all circumstances (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:18). Through an attitude of gratefulness we open our hearts to receive more graces. Discouragement and despair are kept at bay. In happy moments, we can participate in the holy joy of God. In times of tribulation, we have the security that God is in control of everything. You remind me that there is no greater love than laying down one's life for a friend. You have died for me and call me friend. You deserve all the love and gratefulness my heart can muster. Give me the grace to be thankful for all the things that You have done for me big and small. May every beat of my heart be an act of love and thanksgiving. Mary, Mother of Salvation teach me to be grateful to God always. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.