

Scripture Reading

A Reading of the Gospel According to Luke (Luke 11:27-28)

While Jesus was saying these things, one of the women in the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, “Blessed is the womb that bore You and the breasts at which You nursed.” But He said, “On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the Word of God and observe it.” The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection - Sharing in the faith of our Blessed Mother

Blessed Virgin Mary is the perfect disciple of Jesus. One of the most important virtues that we can learn from Mary is Her steadfast, unwavering faith in God. Mary’s faith is unrivalled by any other creature. Mary has been given great promises regarding Her Son, Jesus by Angel Gabriel at the Annunciation: *He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David...* (Luke 1:32). However, we see that none of these was fulfilled in Her lifetime. Despite this, Mary persevered in enduring faith to the very end. She was among the few who stood at the foot of the Cross while Jesus lay dying.

To persevere in faith we must let go of fear for our own safety and security. When Angel Gabriel announced to Mary that she would give birth to a son, Mary could not understand how this would come about as She is a virgin. However, after the angel explained, Mary said Her “Yes” to God even though She was fully aware of the unpleasant and dangerous consequences of being an unmarried mother in a conservative society. All the concern of Mary can be summarized in Her own words: *I am the Lord’s servant. May your word to me be fulfilled* (Luke 1:38). Mary’s heart is steeped in humility, and there is no obstacle internal or external that hinders Mary’s desire to obey God in all things.

To persevere in faith, we must let go of our need to understand how God works in our lives. When the Child Jesus was lost in the temple in Jerusalem for three days, Mary and Joseph were understandably concerned and upset that He remained in the temple while they were frantically searching for Him. Upon finding Him, Jesus said to them, “*Why were you searching for Me?*” He asked. “*Didn’t you know I had to be in My Father’s house?*” (Luke 2:49). At that time, Mary could not understand the words of Jesus but She kept it in Her heart in faith, pondering upon it, waiting patiently for the light of the Spirit of Truth to reveal to Her in God’s time the significance of what Jesus said. Mary simply trusted.

To persevere in faith, we need immense courage to withstand adverse human opinion, and an over-riding determination to do God’s will. We can appreciate how our Blessed Mother felt when She witnessed such great opposition to and rejection of Her Son especially coming from the religious elders, Scribes and Pharisees, all of whom are the elites of the Jewish society. Whilst Jesus was accepted by the simple ordinary people, those in the highest religious hierarchy felt so threatened that they constantly planned to kill Him. Such a great force of hatred and rejection by those in power must be overwhelming for any mother, more so for one who loves Her Son with a tender, pure love. *May your word to Me be fulfilled* (Luke 1:38). Mary overcame Her fears through Her continual prayer that God’s will be done in Her and in Jesus.

Steadfast faith overcomes pain and rejection. No apprentice is greater than the master. A true follower of Christ walking in His footsteps will encounter the same things Jesus encountered: pain and rejection. It was more so for Mary for Her love for Jesus is more than that of all the saints put together (cf St Louis de Monfort – True Devotion to Mary). She was forewarned by Simeon who said: *a sword will pierce Your heart* (cf. Luke 2:35). The greatest test of faith for Mary must be to watch with Her own eyes the crucifixion and agonizing death of Jesus on the Cross. Would God who is love allow such a thing to happen to His own Son? Where is the justice? Instead of rebelling against what happened, Mary’s unwavering faith overcame the pain of rejection of and injustice to Jesus as She stood steadfast by the Cross till the very end, making Her a sterling example of faith we should all imitate.

Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, thank You for the gift of faith. May I follow the example of our Blessed Mother in following You whatever it takes till we reach Calvary together. On the way to the mount of victory, let not my heart be intimidated by adverse human opinion as the world rejects Your teachings and precepts. But let the pain and suffering of Your Passion strengthen my heart and give me the holy boldness to be steadfast to the Truth which I hope to proclaim through the way I live my life. Mary, Mother of Salvation, share with us Your steadfast faith. Thank You Jesus. Praise You Jesus.