

Scripture Reading

A Reading of the Gospel According to John (John 21:15-17)

When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?” “Yes, Lord,” he said, “You know that I love You.” Jesus said, “Feed My lambs.” Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you love Me?” He answered, “Yes, Lord, You know that I love You.” Jesus said, “Take care of My sheep.” The third time He said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love Me?” Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love Me?” He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love You.” Jesus said, “Feed My sheep.” The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection ~ Why God allows us to sin

Sin is inevitable because there is freewill. God made us like Himself in His own image. In this, He gifted us with freewill, intellect, emotion, body, soul and spirit. Without freewill, we will be no better than the animals over which God has given us dominion. When God gifted us freewill, He knows beforehand that there will be a fall into sin. However, through love, God accepted this because through the grace of repentance given to the sinner, God is able to turn everything to the advantage of those love Him (cf. Romans 8:28) although it costs Him dearly. *For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).*

Sin hurts God the most because He is the only One who loves us perfectly. Sin hurts God because salvation is won for His people through the precious Blood of His Son Jesus Christ. True love always sacrifices. *But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on Him, and by His wounds we are healed (Isaiah 53:5).* We are saved by the graces Jesus won for us on the cross. This is a free gift from God for those who accept Jesus as their personal Lord and Saviour. By our own good deeds alone, we cannot reach the Kingdom of God as Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life (John 14:6). *The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6:23).*

God never holds our sins against us but forgets about it when we repent of it. *“I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions, for My own sake, and remembers your sins no more (Isaiah 43:25).* Once the sin is repented of, God never holds it against us. St Peter, the Apostle sinned deeply against the Lord when He denied Him three times in public and deserted Him at the time when Jesus needed him the most. But this did not cause Jesus to take away from Peter the title of the first Pope of the Catholic Church. St Paul sinned terribly in persecuting the followers of Christ but this did not stop Jesus from making him the apostle to the Gentiles. Both saints repented with deep contrition for the terrible sins they committed against God. God looks at the heart and not our sins once we are truly repentant of them.

Through our repentance and God’s forgiveness, we are given a grace to love God with a greater depth and extraordinary generosity. After the resurrection, Jesus, in seriousness, asked Peter whether he loved Him more than the other apostles did. Peter had no idea how much the other apostles loved Jesus but he knew he had to love Jesus much more than they did. Jesus emphasized the seriousness of this question by asking the same question three times. Peter had to profess his love for the Lord in public three times to make up for the three times he publicly denied Jesus. Peter knew that, through the Lord’s forgiveness of his betrayal, he must love the Lord with a great depth and extraordinary generosity of spirit.

Sin humbles us and makes us realise how much God really loves us. Every sin has a debt, and it is Jesus who pays the debt in full. The greater we fall from grace, the more our heart will be open to understand the depth of the mercy and love of God. When Jesus visited Simon the Pharisee (cf Luke 7:36-50), Simon did not give Jesus a very warm welcome because being self-righteous, Simon had not felt the need for forgiveness. On the other hand, the sinful woman who washed Jesus’ feet with her tears and wiped His feet with her hair knew how much mercy she needed from the Lord. Both were sinners but one went away more justified than the other who felt no need to repent.

Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, Your love knows no bounds. To raise us to great dignity, You gave us freewill even knowing that we will fall into sin. You gave us the grace of repentance and paid for the sin in full by Your own Precious Blood. Though our sins cause You so much pain and suffering, You never hold it against us once we repented of the evil we have done. Instead, through our humiliating falls, You open our hearts to receive even greater graces – the grace to love You with supernatural love. Help me understand how even venial sin hurts Your Sacred Heart. May I always remember how great a debt You have paid for me. Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for me. Thank You Jesus. Praise You Jesus.