

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the Gospel according to John (*John 15:13*)

Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection – The only regret we will have in heaven

Love in our hearts comes from God through the action of the Holy Spirit (cf. Romans 5:5). God is love (cf. 1 John 4:8). St John the Evangelist did not say “God is loving” but that “God is love.” There is a world of difference between the two descriptions. Anyone can be loving but only God is love itself, the source of all love. When God is absent, there is no love. God created the human heart to share His love, to receive His love and to give a likewise return of His love. Through the action of the Holy Spirit, God pours His love into human hearts. God was written His laws of love in our hearts (cf. Romans 2:15). Thus, wonderfully made, it is our true nature to love like God. A little innocent child before his mind is deceived by Satan is incapable of lying or of any evil intent. God made all His children like Him with a heart of love, made by love.

True love is sacrificial. God the Father shows us what true love is like. *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).* God the Father did not hesitate to sacrifice His only beloved Son Jesus to expiate for our sins. He did not send Jesus to reclaim His Kingdom from the Prince of Darkness by the power of a military ruler but, instead sent His Son borne incarnate as a little human baby into our human world. In sending Jesus, God the Father exposed His own heart to pain and rejection by the people to whom His Son was sent.

By His life and death, Jesus proves His love and shows us how to love. Jesus was borne into poverty, of poor parents who could not even secure a room for His birth. The birth of Jesus into poverty is a great testimony of God's love for the poor. Jesus would later proclaim with conviction: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, theirs is the Kingdom of God!” (Matthew 5:3). Though Jesus could have been borne into a gilded palace with countless attendants, it was God's will that He be borne in a lowly stable with only the animals for companions. On the Cross, Jesus was a man of abject poverty: no home, no property, no grave, no friends around, even His Heavenly Father had to abandon Him at that moment of agony. *For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich (2 Corinthians 8:9). God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21).*

Jesus suffered for every grace He merited for our sanctification and salvation. *In bringing many sons and daughters to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through what He suffered (Hebrews 2:10).* Jesus in fact was, is and will always be perfect (cf. Hebrews 13:8). However, because He bears the sins of His brothers and sisters, He was ‘imperfect’ on the Cross and endured suffering to bring everyone to perfection, to glory. *Once made perfect, He became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey Him (Hebrews 5:9).* In healing the sins of rejection, Jesus suffered rejection from the moment of birth in a lowly stable to His last breath on a cross of crucifixion and shame. In healing the sins of impurity, Jesus endured cruel scourging till His sinless body was covered by a mass of open, bleeding wounds. In healing the sins of pride and arrogance, Jesus was humiliated, mocked and crowned with a crown of thorns although He is King of kings, Lord of lords and Almighty God!

Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, as God You command us to love You above all else, yet as our personal Saviour by Your life and death, You have convincingly won our love beyond all doubts. You walk in the footsteps of God the Father who shows us what true love is by sending You to us as sacrifice for our sins. You teach us that there is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends. Lord, Your teachings are authoritative and convincing because they are backed by Your own sterling example. Help me make a suitable response to the sacrificial love which You have for me. May I consecrate to You my life and all my sufferings from my first breath to my last so that You may use it for the welfare of all. In heaven when I attain perfect knowledge of how much You have loved me, I know my only regret would be that I am no longer able to suffer any more for You. Sweetest Lord, may all hearts be set on fire with love for you! Mary, Mother of Salvation pray for all your children to love Jesus more and more. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.