

## Scripture Reading

### **A Reading of the Letter of St Paul to the Ephesians (Ephesians 2:8-9)**

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast. The Word of the Lord. R. Thanks be to God.

### **Reflection – Salvation is through faith in Jesus Christ. No one is saved through good deeds alone**

**The dearest wish of God is the salvation of all His children and to be loved by them as He loved them.** God wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth (cf. 1 Timothy 2:4). Like a good father, God provides for all the needs of His children especially their need for salvation after our first parents fell into sin. Immediately after the fall of our first parents, God promised a Saviour that will crush the head of the ancient serpent, Satan (cf. Genesis 3:15) who tempted and led our first parents into sin. Nothing was left to chance. God has His plan of salvation in place before the foundation of the world. God has not abandoned us to our own devices to work out our own salvation.

**It is only sin that separates us from the love of God and works against our salvation.** *But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear (Isaiah 59:2).* Other than our own sins we know there is nothing that can separate us from the love of God. There is no power or authority whether human or spiritual, created or to be created that has the power to cut off the love God holds for every one of us in His heart. St Paul states this point very clearly: *For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:38-39).* Sin is the worst scourge on earth. Increasingly, sin is not recognized as sin but legislated to become a right and a freedom. People do not seem interested to know the difference between good and evil nor interested to know about their salvation. The Deceiver, the Prince of this world, Satan has done well in deceiving the world. *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6:23).*

**Only Jesus takes away our sins through His own Blood in His suffering and death on Calvary.** *For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious Blood of Christ, a Lamb without blemish or defect (1 Peter 1:18-19).* In accordance to the holy justice of God the Father, Jesus paid the price for our sins through His own Blood shed on the Cross. In the Old Testament days in accordance with the Jewish law, the Jews for the forgiveness of their sins had to sacrifice a blemish-free male lamb without defect, and the high priest had to sprinkle its blood on the altar. However, it was pointed out it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins (cf. Hebrews 10:4). This was a foreshadowing of the perfect sacrifice acceptable to God that will completely wipe away our sins. The perfect sacrifice is Jesus, the spotless Lamb of God offered on Mount Calvary and then re-offered in a sacramental way every day in the holy Masses throughout the world.

**Jesus says: “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of My Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 7:21).** To follow Jesus is to deny ourselves, pick up our cross and walk in His footsteps. By His own example, Jesus has taught us how to live our lives on earth. By His sacrifice and death on the Cross, Jesus teaches us how to love till the end. Through His teachings and commandments, Jesus teaches how to walk humbly with Him on the true path to heaven, our true home. *Jesus said: If you love Me, keep My commands (John 14:15).* Faith is dead without good works (cf. James 2:17) and is useless for our salvation. Our faith must be lived out in our everyday life.

### **Conversation with Jesus**

Precious Lord, You are the ladder that Jacob dreamt spanning the chasm between heaven and earth. The only way to God the Father is through You alone. For You are the Way, the Truth and the Life. Rid me of all pride, malice, disorderly self-love, stubbornness, all darkness in my soul so that Your love may fill my heart. Let Your love spread to all areas of my life so that I may witness Your love to those around me. Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for me. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.