

## Scripture Reading

### **A Reading of the Gospel according to Matthew** (*Matthew 16:26*)

What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

### Reflection ~ The whole universe is not worth even one soul

**A priceless gift from God – Our soul, our most valuable property on earth.** Humankind was created differently from God's other creatures. In the creation of Adam, God breathed His breath into Adam which He formed from the dust of the ground (cf. Genesis 2:7). Thus, Adam was created with not just a physical human body but also a soul which lasts forever and which is filled with the divine life of God! Scripture records only two times when God breathed into human beings: the first instance at the creation of Adam, the first human being, and the second instance was after the resurrection when Jesus breathed into the Apostles, giving them the Holy Spirit and the authority to forgive sins (cf. John 20:22-23). The saints tell us that if we can see a soul in a state of sanctifying grace (without the stain of sins), we would die of ecstasy! Such is the beauty of a pure soul! It is like a tiny piece of God!

**There is absolutely nothing we can give in exchange for our soul, once it is lost.** A lost soul is a dead soul that has completely lost its sanctifying grace (supernatural life of God in our soul) through habitual unrepented sins. Mortal sin results in loss of sanctifying grace from our souls. Once lost, the only way to regain life for our soul is through seeking God's forgiveness of our sins provided we are still alive. Thus, the Sacrament of Confession is very important. The Lord instituted this Sacrament immediately after resurrection giving divine authority to the Apostles to forgive sins. Our soul is made to last for eternity like its Creator, and whose life is the divine life of God. Yes, we are wonderfully made! Though we do not deserve it, God gives a soul to every human being conceived naturally and born into this world. Our life on earth is a holy pilgrimage walking on the true path following the teachings of Jesus to reach our true home in heaven. In adhering to the teachings of Jesus on how to live our life on earth, we can preserve our soul fit and worthy for heaven.

**The highest mission God gives us – helping Jesus save souls.** Jesus came to earth in the flesh for the sole purpose of saving souls. His mission is not to save His other creatures. Not the fallen angels, not the animals, not the environment. The animal welfare activists would love to save the animals. The green environment activists would love to save the environment. However, through Baptism, Christians are called to share in the divine mission of Jesus in saving souls. This is the highest mission God can give us. His divine plan of salvation includes a unique role for each and every one of us. Satan, the Great Deceiver, Liar and Enemy of our Souls has done a great job in deceiving the world in believing that there is no God, nor the existence of heaven and hell, that life is an end in itself. Given his widespread dominion, he is called the Prince of the World for now. Jesus said there are many people walking on the road that leads to hell (cf. Matthew 7:13).

**At the end of our life, we can lose anything but not our soul.** St. Francis Xavier was entirely won to God, by earnestly meditating on the words of Christ: "What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?" He was gifted with a great intellect and was a professor of a university in Paris before his conversion. After conversion, St Francis Xavier left his bright career and pursuit of earthly ambition, and instead embarked on with great zeal and perseverance the highest mission on earth. St Francis Xavier died at forty-six but not before he spent all his energies in bringing Christ to difficult mission countries including India. In taking farewell of any friend, the last advice of Francis Xavier would be: "Take care of the salvation of your soul."

### Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, thank You for the priceless gift of my soul. My soul is worth Your most precious Blood shed on the cross, Your sweat, Your tears, Your rejection, Your humiliation, Your anguish, Your death on the Cross! The whole universe, no matter how wonderful, is not worth the value of even one soul! Give me and fellow believers holy wisdom to see with the eyes of our heart the true value of things in this passing world. Teach us to spend our time on earth worthy of the children of God. Give us the zeal of St Francis Xavier in sharing Your mission. At the end of our life may we not only merit the glorious unfading crown but also, through our prayers and patient acceptance of our sufferings, bring many others with us to the great Heavenly Banquet. Lord, give us Your great love for souls! Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for us. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.