

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the Gospel according to Matthew (*Matthew 26:26-28*)

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and giving it to His disciples said, "Take and eat; this is My Body." Then He took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you, for this is My Blood of the covenant, which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins." The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection - God binds Himself to His people in a new, unbreakable, eternal, saving Covenant

Blessed are we who are people of the New Covenant. By shedding His Blood on the Cross of Calvary, Jesus became the mediator of the New Covenant. Truly blessed are those who live after the First Coming of Christ. That includes all of us! *For I say to you, many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, but did not see it, and to hear what you hear, but did not hear it.* (*Luke 10:24*). Although we may not see Jesus in the flesh like the Apostles did, nevertheless we do not have any less presence of Christ in the holy Sacraments especially in the Holy Eucharist which has the Real Presence of Christ. In simple language it means we have in the Eucharist the real and total presence of Christ in all aspects: Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity. Although our physical eyes cannot register this, we have the eyes of faith. How do we handle this great privilege of Christ's Real Presence in our midst in the Holy Eucharist? How firmly we believe in Christ's Real Presence in the Blessed Sacrament will determine the strength of our Catholic faith and our love response to our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. May we never be guilty of the grievous ingratitude of forgetting and neglecting the Presence of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament!

People of the Old Testament cannot be saved by their animal sacrifices to God because these cannot take away sins. Hence, before the First Coming of Christ, the gates of heaven were closed to all mankind. *But in those sacrifices there is only a yearly remembrance of sins, for it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats take away sins. For this reason, when He came into the world, He said: "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You prepared for Me (Hebrews 10:3-5).* Since God was not satisfied with the useless animal sacrifices, in the fullness of time, He sent His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, the mediator of the New Covenant Who through the shedding of His Blood wrought redemption of the whole human race. Thus, our Saviour is the only begotten Son of God borne incarnate into our world and "made perfect" by the sufferings He endured so that He becomes the source of salvation for all who obey Him (cf. Hebrews 5:8-9). When Jesus died, the massive veil in the Jerusalem Temple covering the Holy of Holies, which was reserved for the presence of God, was split from top to bottom, signifying that our access to God was made possible through splitting of Christ's flesh (cf. Hebrews 10:19-20).

I will place My law within them, and write it upon their hearts; I will be their God, and they shall be My people (Jeremiah 31:33). Through conscience and reason, God teaches His people the truth of the difference between good and evil. When Jesus ascended into heaven, He sent the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth to teach us all things and to remind us of all that Jesus taught us (cf. John 14:26). In contrast, the people of the Old Testament did not receive the full outpouring of the Holy Spirit. *But the Lord has not given you a heart to understand, or eyes to see, or ears to hear until this day (Deuteronomy 29:3).* The Holy Spirit that is given to us at Baptism leads us to live by faith in Jesus Christ. The flesh tends towards sinfulness and death while the Spirit tends towards holiness and life. *For those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God (Romans 8:14).*

We are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people called to be His own (cf. 1 Peter 2:9). Through the new covenant, as a result of the redemption by the precious Blood of Jesus Christ, we are made worthy to be adopted children of God Most High through the Holy Spirit that works mightily in those who are obedient to God. Through the Holy Spirit, we have the grace to call out to God as our Father. *As proof that you are children, God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" (Galatians 4:6).* As children of God, our heritage is completely transformed to our favour. Through God's great generosity and despite our unworthiness, we become co-heirs with Jesus Christ! *So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God (Galatians 4:7).*

Conversation with Jesus: Precious Lord, the wisdom and works of God are totally amazing and praiseworthy! Through no merit of mine but by Your grace which You gained for me through Your life, death and resurrection, You raise me up from a fallen sinner who deserves condemnation to a child of the Most High who shares with the only begotten Son of God the inheritance to God's Kingdom! Give me a fuller measure of Your Spirit so that I may heed and respond to the call to holiness to live a life worthy of a child of the Most High in order to be made fit for eternal gladness in Your glorious Kingdom. Transform my heart and mind so that I can truly identify myself as a child of God and that my life may reflect this truth. Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for me. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus. www.twohearts.hk