

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the Second Letter of Paul to the Corinthians (2 Corinthians 12:6-10)

Even if I should choose to boast, I would not be a fool, because I would be speaking the truth. But I refrain, so no one will think more of me than is warranted by what I do or say, or because of these surpassingly great revelations. Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. The Word of the Lord. R. Thanks be to God.

Reflection – Grace is God's power and life within us

Grace to keep St Paul humble. God is using St Paul to do great work for His Kingdom. Paul was given great revelations so that he can be a strong witness to Christ. To keep Paul from becoming proud, God gave to St Paul an affliction, a suffering. Paul did not reveal what this was. Paul begged the Lord three times to remove the affliction but in His infinite wisdom, the Lord did not do so. Instead, He reassured Paul that He will give Paul all the graces that he needs in order to overcome all the various temptations posed by this suffering. God's grace provides sufficient help for every situation in our life.

Only God can give grace which is merited by Christ for us. Grace is earned for us by the Passion and Resurrection of Christ (cf. CCC 1992, CCC 1989). Grace is an undeserved, gratuitous, favour and free gift from God to help us respond to His call and our vocation to become His adopted children. Grace is communicated to us through God's Spirit, the Holy Spirit who is within us. The Holy Spirit infuses His graces into our souls to heal it of sin and to sanctify it (cf. CCC 1999). God's graces can be actual graces or sanctifying (habitual) graces. Actual graces are God's intervention through the Holy Spirit moving our hearts and minds to walk on the path of truth towards our salvation. Sanctifying (habitual) grace is permanent in our souls (if free from mortal sin) and is the divine, supernatural life of God within our souls. It is through the grace of the Holy Spirit that we can partake of the divine nature and supernatural life of God (cf. CCC 1996, CCC 1997).

Grace is God's power within us. Though we have a fallen, weak and sinful human nature due to sins, we have been called to what we have been created to be: God's sons and daughters who partake of His divine life and nature through the working of the grace of the Holy Spirit within us. Whist our life may be a constant trial of our faith and trust in God, God makes available to every person all the graces we need in order to overcome all and any temptation in every present moment. St Paul explained this situation clearly: *But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed (2 Corinthians 4:7-9).*

We achieve perfect freedom when we freely cooperate with God's grace. God will never force us to do His will. To do so will make a mockery of His gift of freewill to us. On the other hand, the most ardent desire of God is the salvation of all His precious children for whom He has sent His beloved Son Jesus to the Cross on Calvary as atonement for the sins of all. Once we freely assent to believe in Jesus Christ, God's grace moves our will and intellect to respond to His call and our vocation to become His adopted sons and daughters. That is the will of God for every person. God's grace has the power to remove our sins so that we can become whiter than snow! (cf. Psalm 51:7). Through God's grace, we will be divinized to become like Jesus (cf. 1 John 3:2) and transformed into His image with ever-increasing glory (cf. 2 Corinthians 3:18)!

Conversation with Jesus: Precious Lord, through Your Holy Spirit You make available to me all the graces I need in every present moment to adhere to Your teachings and the Truth. Though my life is a test of my faith in and trust in You, You promise I will never be tested beyond my endurance and that in every temptation, through Your grace there will be a way out (cf. 1 Corinthians 10:13). Lord, purify my heart and mind of all hard-heartedness and stubbornness so that I may always be open to Your grace. May I never despair of my weaknesses for I know they will draw Your graces upon me. May I never fear any trial or difficulty that You may send into my life for my sanctification, for I know Your grace is sufficient for me to overcome all. Thank You for Your truly amazing grace! Mary, Mother of Divine Grace, intercede for me. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.