

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the Gospel according to Matthew (*Matthew 28:19-20*)

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection – Living in God's Presence

Before Jesus ascended into heaven, He promised that He will be with us till the end of time. The one who loves always wants to be with the beloved. A good indicator of someone's love is how much time he/she is willing to spend in the company of the beloved. It is God's promise that He will never forsake us as long as we are on pilgrimage on this earth. *Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! (Isaiah 49:15).* No matter how badly we offend God, He will always be there waiting for our repentance with outstretched arms like the father that awaits the return of the prodigal son. *Though my father and mother forsake me, the LORD will receive me (Psalm 27:10).*

The secular world cannot recognize or feel the presence of God and thus, is filled with emptiness in the heart. Those who have no time for God or reject the truth of His existence cannot recognize or feel God's presence in the world. God made the human heart to love Him and to love others for sake of Him. When God is not loved for His own sake, the human heart feels an emptiness which it tries to fill with other lesser loves. However, love for creatures and things can never fulfill the heart in its deepest longing to be united to its Creator. Nothing satisfies the human heart till its greatest longing is fulfilled. Our soul is restless till it rests in God, its Maker (cf. Psalm 42:1).

For in Him we live and move and have our being (Acts 17:28). Through His Holy Spirit, God is in us and all around us. We need not climb the highest mountain or search out the deepest cave to look for God. He is already in our hearts, waiting for us to speak to Him. God is just a prayer away. Though we are not always present to Him and often forget His presence, God is always present to us. He does not sleep and is always watching over us. Even when we are asleep He is with us (cf. Psalm 139:18). Scripture tells us He is especially close to the broken-hearted. *The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit (Psalm 34:18).* Like a tender-hearted mother, God watches closely over the vulnerable and suffering. Suffering brings us closer to God because He draws closer and we are detached from earthly distractions.

Living in God's presence is to live in prayer and trust, and to recognize God's presence in those around us. When we are aware of God's presence around us wherever we go, our life should become a continuing prayer of adoration, praise, thanksgiving and supplication to the Lord. Living in God's presence and recognizing His presence in everyone is the key to holiness to which we have been called in order that we may be made fit for eternal life. When we do not place God at the focus of our lives, we leave the door of our heart open to admit lesser loves into our lives. This destroys our inner harmony and we live a life that is not full. *I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full (John 10:10).* Recognizing God's presence in others gives us the power to love others as we love ourselves as is commanded by the Lord. *The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of Mine, you did for Me (Matthew 25:40).*

Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, it is so comforting to know that even if everyone rejects me, You will never abandon me. Your presence is all around me. Whether I fly to the highest peak or dive to the deepest depth, You are there upholding me with Your right hand. This truth is too wondrous for me. Whether I feel it or not, You are always with me. This is Your promise. I treasure it. Help me recognize Your presence in others so that I can love You in others. Please flood my soul with Your holy presence. Lift my heart and break all unholy bondages so that I can feel the calm and peace that accompany Your holy presence. Through striving to walk in Your footsteps and fidelity to Your divine will, help each child of God live in the peace and security of Your holy presence every day till we finally attain our glorious eternal inheritance in heaven. In training ourselves to live in Your holy presence we make ourselves fit for living in our heavenly home where we will finally have our heart's content of seeing You face to face (cf. 1 John 3:2). Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for me. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.