

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the Book of Revelation (*Revelation 22:12-14*)

“Behold, I am coming soon. I bring with Me the recompense I will give to each according to his deeds. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. Blessed are they who wash their robes so as to have the right to the tree of life and enter the city through its gates.” The Word of the Lord. R. Thanks be to God.

Reflection – Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus and be enthroned in my heart

Our heart is closed and hardened by our personal sins. When Jesus embarked on His public life and started preaching and performing miracles, many of the Jews, God’s chosen people, could not recognize Him as the promised Messiah, the long-awaited Saviour who would come in their midst. Even those who were well trained in religious matters were blind as to the true identity of Jesus. Instead, they felt threatened by the authority and following that Jesus naturally commanded. Pride and sins close our heart to see the truth and the Hand of God working in our lives. It blinds us to the error in our mind, the pride in our heart and the sins in our soul. Pride and unrepented sins close our heart to God’s graces which are needed for the humility to recognize our hidden faults, to repent of them, to fight complacency and lukewarmness, to respond to God’s call to holiness and to constantly renew our heart and mind so that we can be led by our faith and not by our feelings (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:7).

With all vigilance guard your heart, for in it are the sources of life (Proverb 4:23).

The first simple act that can open our heart to God is sincere prayer. Every time we open our heart in sincere prayer, it is a victory for the Kingdom of God. Thus, St Paul exhorts us to pray and give thanks to God always. *Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus (1 Thessalonians 5:17-18).* Sincere prayer puts us in our proper place before God in submission to His authority over us, strengthens us in humility and courage to look into the dark recesses of our heart to recognize our unacknowledged faults and failings in true repentance. A prudent soul aiming for holiness will do this spiritual exercise of examination of conscience at least once a day especially at the end of the day. This practice will prevent the temptation of self-righteousness and complacency from gaining a hold over us.

Jesus cannot be enthroned in our heart if there are things we hold in our heart more important than our love and allegiance to Him. Any thing or person or attitude or issue can become a false god once we allow it to have a hold, a bondage, an attachment over us. It could be money, physical appearance, career, a person, pride, unforgiveness, complacency, stubbornness, a bad habit we do not want to give up, reputation, power, popularity, pleasure and sensuality, etc. The status of it being a false god may not be obvious to us but the amount of time, resources, thought spent on it will throw light on the truth. To carry our cross is not easy. To accept it we need to overcome our self: our ego, feelings, weaknesses, love of comfort, fear of suffering, fear of rejection, fear of ridicule, etc. Thus, Jesus teaches us that the most important commandment is to love God with all our heart, all our mind, all our strength and all our soul. When we try to do this, we will find the second most important commandment of loving others as ourselves not too difficult to follow. Once we resolutely place God at the top of our life priorities, we will recognize the crosses sent to us to build up our faith, and will not reject them but be strengthened to accept and carry them. **The heavier the cross, the greater the grace God will make available to us.**

To walk in the footsteps of Jesus, we must imitate His life of love and sacrifice. By His life on earth, Jesus shows us how we should live. His life is lived totally for the sake of the Heavenly Father’s will. Carrying out the Father’s will is paramount, above all other concerns. Even as a Child, Jesus was not afraid to upset His human parents by remaining in the temple in Jerusalem for 3 days, unknown to them but adhering to His Father’s will. **Jesus said, “My food is to do the will of the One Who sent Me and to finish His work (John 4:34).** Thus, Jesus teaches us that we should live in order to do God’s will which is one with His love and providence. This is the highest purpose of our life. An interior life marked by sincere prayer and sacrifice will strengthen us to discern God’s will and open the heart to receive the graces needed to fulfill God’s will every day.

Conversation with Jesus: Precious Lord, make my heart Your everlasting throne. Rid me of all bondages to things or people or to myself. It is You that my inmost being seeks and hungers for. It is for You that I am created. It is in You that I find life, true joy and fulfillment. It is through You that I am made a child of the Most High. It is through Your own Precious Blood shed on Calvary that I am made spotlessly clean and justified to stand in the Presence of God. It is through You that my hope is indestructible and my eternal inheritance glorious beyond my imagination (cf. 1 Corinthians 2:9). Take me into Your Heart and make of me whatever You so desire so that the Father’s will can be fulfilled in my life which I entrust totally to You. Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for me. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus. www.twohearts.hk