

## Scripture Reading

### A Reading from the Book of Prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 7:14)

Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a Son, and will call Him Immanuel. The Word of the Lord. R. Thanks be to God.

### Reflection ~ May Baby Jesus be born in all hearts this Christmas

**True repentance gives us real freedom to welcome God into our hearts.** The mercy of God is unfathomable. However, to receive God's mercy, we need to open our hearts in true repentance. Unrepented sins harden our hearts and close it to receiving graces from God. Repentance of sins is so important, it is Christ's first and last subject when He came to earth. Immediately after Resurrection, Jesus instituted the Sacrament of Reconciliation, giving divine authority to His Apostles to forgive sins (cf. John 20:23). In Sacramental Confession, Jesus acts through the priest confessor and forgives the sins of the penitent and fills his/her soul with actual graces to strengthen it, and sanctifying graces to make it holy and alive. It is no small miracle as it is only God who can transform a soul from its blackened, sinful state to one full of its original beauty.

**True repentance breaks the bondages due to sins.** Sins weaken us in all aspects. On the spiritual level, it prevents or hinders us in doing the right things. We understand the feeling of St Paul when he said he did not do the things he wanted to do but kept doing the things he hated (cf. Romans 7:15). Unrepented sins build up the bondage due to vice, bad habits, and sins. It weakens us in the face of temptation and abandons high ideals. It closes our hearts to receiving graces which can strengthen us internally. It feeds our hidden pride and selfishness, and blinds us to our own faults and wrong doings. *Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin (John 8:34).* Despite Christ's victory on the Cross, we remain in slavery to evil if we do not have true repentance, the absence of which will lead us to lose the horror of sin.

**True repentance helps us prioritise and make room for what is important.** People's lives are filled with busyness. Even the holy event of Christmas is filled with commercialism the world over. People's lives are filled with ceaseless activity to make money, to enjoy, etc.. True repentance can help give inner peace to hearts in order to meditate on what is eternal and to give the wisdom to treat earthly things as they should be treated: as every help to gain the eternal. *Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you (John 6:27).*

**True repentance gives us the power to forgive others.** Only when we find it in our hearts to forgive those who hurt us, then can we receive forgiveness from God for our own sins (cf. Matthew 6:15). Many souls are locked into the unhappy past and cannot avail of God's graces to live fully in the present moment because they cannot let go of the hurt they sustained from others. Unforgiveness is like a cancer of the soul. When we cling to the truth that each and every one of us has a great need of forgiveness from God for our own sins we are less likely to fall into the temptation of harbouring unforgiveness of others. It takes a conscious act of the free will to choose happiness and to forgive others so that we can be free to love God and others. God's graces are available for the asking.

**Making room for Jesus in our hearts require an act of the will.** We give great care and attention to the important plans in our life. If we are convinced God deserves first place in our lives, we should work towards this goal with even greater dedication and determination than when we face temporal plans and projects. Jesus gives us His all and God deserves the very best from us. Making God first in our life is a decision that we need to work at on a daily basis in our fight against sin, pride, the allure of pleasures, riches and comfort and anything which stands in the way of our on-going conversion.

### Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, may I not behave like the Pharisee who went to the temple and prayed in a self righteous way, being blind to the sins in his heart. Flood the light of Your Truth in my heart and all hearts to illuminate all the dark corners and bring to our knowledge all the wrong doings that we need to seek forgiveness from You. Nothing hardens our hearts to Your love except our unrepented sins. We ask for the grace of true repentance for all Your children this Christmas so that all hearts may be open to You, and You can make our lives a celebration of Your love. Through our sincere repentance break away all unhealthy bondages that have a hold over us. Give us the true freedom to seek You first in everything so that all things we need will be given unto us as You promise. Mary, Mother of our Saviour, pray specially for all Your children this Christmas. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus. [www.twohearts.hk](http://www.twohearts.hk)