

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the Gospel according to John (John 19:25)

Standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection – Our ardent love for God will empower us to witness to the Truth till the very end

Love leads God to sacrifice His only beloved Son for us. The solid proof of love is reflected in the degree of sacrifice endured for the sake of the loved one. Jesus teaches us that there is no greater love than to die for the loved one (cf. John 15:13). St Paul exhorts us to be rooted in love and to have the spiritual strength to understand the length, breadth, height and depth of Christ's love so that we may be filled with the fullness of God and be perfected in our faith (cf. Ephesians 3:18-19). With God's grace, to understand is to put into practice a love that is: so extensive that it excludes no one, so broad that it forgives all wrongs, so high that it flies above all pettiness and human weaknesses and so deep that its foundation in God is not easily shaken. Through His life on earth, Jesus gives us a good example of how to love and to remain faithful to God.

God has given us His Word and Commandments to know and to remain in His truth. *Consecrate them in the truth. Your Word is truth (John 17:17).* God's Word and His Commandments define for us with clarity and divine authority what is true and false, what is good and evil. It is not according to shifting human opinion or ideology but based on God's divine, immutable laws. Thus, the Ten Commandments were presented to Moses engraved in stone tablets. In this age of moral relativism and false ideologies, God's Word and Commandments provide us with an absolutely reliable standard with which to judge what is true or false. God cannot lie. He is the Truth. Anything running contrary to Him and His divine teachings, Word and Commandments is outside the truth i.e. false. Falsehood and lies lead only to sin and corruption of souls. *Jesus said to him, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me (John 14:6).* We need to know and live the truths of our faith in order to withstand the onslaught of false ideologies now gaining worldwide popularity and acceptance, especially those regarding human sexuality, gender, marriage, and sanctity of life issues.

Through His Church God has given us His Sacraments to live a sacramental life of grace. If we truly understand the significance and power of the holy Sacraments, we will appreciate that they are but strokes of genius by God. God does everything well but in the Sacraments, we appreciate how He channels His mighty but silent and loving power through human agents, His priests to give torrents of divine grace to His poor children on earth. Only God can give grace. Jesus, the Author of All Graces is the One Who won for us all the graces we need in order to attain our everlasting crown of glory. We need grace for everything we do even for the very breath we take. Most of all, we need grace to overcome our pride, hardheartedness, temptation, to remain in the state of grace and to live an earthly life worthy of the children of the Most High.

God has given us His Holy Spirit, the guarantee and first installment of our glorious, eternal inheritance (cf. Ephesians 1:13-14, 2 Corinthians 1:22). God's seal of ownership is on us. His Holy Spirit is in our hearts, working tirelessly night and day on our sanctification, preparing us fit for God's Paradise, our true home. The Holy Spirit working through God's grace reminds us of and helps us understand all the truths Jesus teaches us. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth. Through the light provided by the Holy Spirit we can discern truths from falsehoods, good from evil even when these are dressed up to look good. The Holy Spirit takes from Christ and gives us what He takes from Christ (cf. John 16:14). God's Holy Spirit is always with us. He is our divine Sanctifier and Comforter. Once God withdraws His Holy Spirit from us, our life on earth will come to an end.

Conversation with Jesus: Precious Lord, You have given me all necessary help to be steadfast in my faith. I make a firm decision now to be true to the Truth till the last day of my life. To be strong, my faith in You must be rooted in a solid foundation of ardent love for You. Open my hardened heart and enlighten my darkened mind to have a good understanding of the length, breadth, height and depth of Your everlasting love for me. Infuse into my soul a pure love for You and all that You represent. Help me to love the interior life marked by deep prayer, sacrifices, holy discipline of my senses and desires, good works and a great love for Your holy will. Help me hear Your call to holiness and keep my soul in the state of grace so that I can resist temptation better. In all situations, may I focus only on You so that I will not sink in the sea of the storm but walk on the waves as You have commanded St Peter to do so. By Your grace, help me to witness to the Truth even in the face of adversity so that having run the good race, I can go forward confidently to receive my eternal crown of glory reserved only for those who persevere to the end. Mary, Protectress of the Faith, you who stood by Jesus to the end, make my faith strong like yours! Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus. www.twohearts.hk