

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the Gospel according to Luke (Luke 14:16-21, 24)

He (Jesus) replied to him, "A man gave a great dinner to which he invited many. When the time for the dinner came, he dispatched his servant to say to those invited, 'Come, everything is now ready.' But one by one, they all began to excuse themselves. The first said to him, 'I have purchased a field and must go to examine it; I ask you, consider me excused.' And another said, 'I have purchased five yoke of oxen and am on my way to evaluate them; I ask you, consider me excused.' And another said, 'I have just married a woman, and therefore I cannot come.' The servant went and reported this to his master. Then the master of the house in a rage commanded his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in here the poor and the crippled, the blind and the lame.' For, I tell you, none of those men who were invited will taste my dinner." The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection – Overcoming the Spirit of the World

The Spirit of the World tempts us to elevate our legitimate concerns to the status of false gods. The Spirit of the World is none other than the diabolical spirit of Satan, the Enemy of our Souls. Since Satan cannot touch God, he concentrates on hurting God through his attacks on His children. His mission is to deny God's children of the glorious eternal inheritance God has lovingly prepared for each of His children, and instead, to drag them to eternal perdition. In the above parable of the Great Feast, the common feature in the various situations is that each and every one of the concerns is legitimate. Their excuses are solid and no one can refute them. Yet in the eyes of God, human wisdom cannot stand and becomes folly. Anything thing or person or situation that we treat with more importance than our loyalty to and love of God is a false god in the eyes of God. It is a violation of His First Commandment, and God will not tolerate such behaviour from His children.

The Spirit of the World leverages on the emptiness of hearts and tempts us with many earthly pursuits. His diabolical expertise is the willful and cunning deception of souls. He is especially active in this modern era. In this era marked by the denial of the truth of the existence of God and the widespread embracing of falsehoods, the emptiness of man's heart opens the door to the diabolical work of the Spirit of the World. The Spirit of the World encourages in empty souls an insatiable desire to be unentertained, to always seek out and try novel things, to be focused on oneself, to follow one's feelings unreservedly. It encourages us to be always busy, to have apathy or no time for silent reflection or prayer. It attempts to dissipate our limited time on earth with preoccupation with pursuits that leave us no time or energy for actively seeking God. And there are myriads of ways it can resort to. It can be a thing, a person, or an activity.

We are in this world but cannot belong to this world (cf. John 17:15-16). God is not asking us to withdraw from the world but is calling us to resist the Evil One's temptation of enslavement to the world. Instead, He calls us to be the light of the world (cf. Matthew 5:13) and salt of the earth (cf. Matthew 5:14). Satan does his diabolical, hidden work primarily on our hearts, minds and the use of our time. We need to constantly purify our minds by the help of God's grace to remain in the truth of God, to prevent ourselves from engrossment in our self-interest, to refrain from judging others, from impure thoughts. Instead, with God's grace, our minds can be freed up to meditate on God's truths and His love for us shown through His Son, Jesus Christ. By God's grace, our hearts can be freed of inordinate love for earthly treasures that do not truly satisfy.

Seek God first and all things we need will be given to us (cf. Matthew 6:33). There are many distractions for our time in this world but it is up to us to control them. Through an interior life of sincere prayer and sacrifice, and the desire to do God's will, we can receive God's grace and have the strength to seek first the Kingdom of God. God's promise is that He will fulfill all our needs if we put Him on the top of our priorities (cf. Matthew 6:33). We need to concentrate on God rather than on His gifts.

Conversation with Jesus: Precious Lord, You said: Fear not, I have overcome the world (cf. John 16:33). For our sakes, during Your fasting in the desert, You were tempted by Satan to place Your hunger and need of food above God, to place earthly treasures and earthly glory above God and to show Your pride in being Son of God. You overcome all these temptations victoriously because of Your overwhelming love for God and His will. I consecrate to You my mind so that it will always be ruled and guarded by Your Truth. I consecrate to You my heart so that it may totally belong to You. I consecrate to You my time on earth so that You will always guide me on the use of my time. I consecrate to You my entire self through the Immaculate Heart of Mary so that You can guide me in every aspect of my life so that I will know how to please You. Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for me. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus. www.twohearts.hk