

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the Book of Job (Job 1:20-22)

Then Job arose and tore his cloak and cut off his hair. He fell to the ground and worshiped. He said, "Naked I came forth from my mother's womb, and naked shall I go back there. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord!" In all this Job did not sin, nor did he charge God with wrong. The Word of the Lord. R. Thanks be to God.

Reflection – Remaining in the peace of Christ

True peace is brought about by the precious Blood of Jesus Christ (cf. Colossians 1:20). It is significant that Jesus greeted His disciples with peace only after His resurrection when the work of redemption is perfectly accomplished by His bloody Sacrifice on the Cross of Calvary. Through the bloody Sacrifice of Jesus, mankind is reconciled with God, and true peace ensues. True peace is present in the soul that is in good standing with God i.e. in the state of sanctifying grace. The conscience is peaceful, so are the heart and mind. However, this underlying peace can be easily shaken in our everyday lives which are full of challenges and trials of all kinds.

True peace in our soul can be disturbed by unholy fears and lack of full trust in God. When faced with adversity or trial, it is a great temptation to be led by our overwhelming feelings. However, feelings are usually subjective and falsely amplify the negative aspects of the fearful/unpleasant situation. Nevertheless, fear/anxiety is one of the most common and life-changing emotions. Unholy fear makes us forget the presence and power of God which should be focused on if we want to be overcomers in any trial or adversity. St Paul in Ephesians (Ep 6: 10-17) reminds us that we are in constant battle with the Evil One who is tirelessly trying to undermine our faith in God with the ultimate motive of making us fall into sin. We must recognize the common but effective tactic of Satan to introduce unholy fear/anxiety into our hearts at every possible opportunity. Thus, we should be led not by what we sense but by faith (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:7).

Learning a good lesson from biblical Job. When several disasters of major proportion visited Job, he did not blame or spoke negatively against God. Instead he said: "Naked I came forth from my mother's womb, and naked shall I go back there. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord!" (Job 1:21). The reaction of Job gives us an important lesson on humility, trust and knowing our proper place in the eyes of God, in times of great trial.

Accepting everything as from God. The human nature has an inclination to lay blame on someone when something goes wrong. Whilst this may be true in some situation, the bottom line is God allows it to happen. God is in control all the time even when it seems He is absent. Absolutely nothing can happen without the permitting will of God. And when God allows something bad or evil to happen, we can be sure that He will turn it for the good of those who love Him. *We know that all things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28).* Once we have the faith to firmly believe that God is in absolute control and that everything happens only when He allows it, the fear/anxiety of some adverse future event loses its sting. *Who speaks so that it comes to pass, unless the Lord commands it (Lamentations 3:37).*

Knowing our place, and letting God be God. Fear, frustration and eventually despair sets in when we try to be God and take control of or agonize over things which are really outside our human control. A good dose of humility in our heart will give us a timely reminder of our rightful place in the holy presence of God. Given the weakened human nature, it is hard to relinquish control even of things outside our human control. However, letting God take charge of everything is an act of humility and trust which can effectively demonstrate our love for Him. In the process, we remain in His peace, His priceless peace.

Conversation with Jesus: Precious Lord, true peace is a precious gift from You. You said it is a peace that the world cannot give. I need this peace. I need peace in my mind, peace in my heart, peace in my soul, peace in my spirit. Only You can give this peace through Your precious Blood on the Cross which brought about our reconciliation with God. For Your peace to reign in me, my love and trust for You must be united. Merely professing my love for You and not prove it by demonstrating my trust in You will not maintain the underlying peace in my soul whenever I encounter some adversities. *With firm purpose You maintain peace; in peace, because of our trust in You (Isaiah 26:3).* Through Your Passion on the Cross, please magnify my faith in You so that I will never waver in my trust in You even in the face of adversity. Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for me. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.