

Scripture Reading

A Reading of the Second Letter of St Paul to the Corinthians (*2 Corinthians 10:3-5*)

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. The Word of the Lord. R. Thanks be to God.

Reflection – Submitting our Minds in Obedience to the Truth

Our real enemies are not people but evil spirits. *For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms (Ephesians 6:12).* The human mind is an important battlefield of the Kingdom of Satan. Sometimes we wonder how such black thoughts can enter our minds. They do not appear by accident. They have been inserted by the Enemy of our salvation. Once these thoughts are not immediately rejected and thrown out but entertained and dwelt upon, they sow the seeds of sin: suspicion, judgemental attitudes, anger, hatred, unforgiveness, grudges, negative thoughts, fears, impurity, evil scheming, etc.

Pride in one's own opinion closes the mind to truth. *Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight (Proverbs 3:5-6).* It is a great temptation to trust ourselves too much. The more pride we invest in our opinion, the less ready we are to change our stance and admit error. Pride opens the door to Satan who will do everything to obstruct the truth in the mind. He will put up "arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God" – in other words, lies and falsehoods clothed in goodness and cunningly presented as the truth. A good example of pride in one's opinion is the case of the Pharisees in the time of Jesus. Though they have witnessed all the divine signs and wonders, their pride in themselves and in their privileged position in their society led them to hold tight to their erroneous human opinion that excluded any change in their stance, blocking any conversion and the acceptance of Jesus as their long-awaited Messiah.

Pride of cynicism closes the mind to truth. Hardened by unpleasant experience, unrepented sin and maintained by ignorance, a mind overtaken by cynicism is impervious to the acceptance of truth. Jesus was not able to work miracles in some places because of the lack of faith of the people there. They asked: *Isn't this the carpenter? Isn't this Mary's Son and the Brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren't His sisters here with us?" And they took offense at Him (Mark 6:3).* Only a change in personal opinion and an admission of error can truly lead to a conversion of the heart to God. A cynical mind has little understanding of the ways of God.

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind (Romans 12:2). It is a big challenge to be different from the popular thinking and dictates of the world around us. Our values and doctrine are at odds with that of the world and increasingly being challenged especially in the western world. The difficulties of daily living add to the pressures: *The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the Word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the Word, making it unfruitful (Matthew 13:22).* Our minds need to be constantly renewed by our supplication to the Holy Spirit within us so that by submitting our mind in obedience to Jesus, the Truth we may be filled with God's light, divine truth, knowledge, understanding and wisdom.

Discernment is necessary to know the difference between truth and falsehood, and between good and evil. Discernment is a gift of the Holy Spirit carrying with it divine revelation of what is true or false, good or evil. It is different from human opinion. The sorry state of the world today arises from the lack of discernment of what is good or evil, truth or falsehood. God is not given His proper due, and sin is not recognised as sin but even promoted as "choice", "human right", "life style" etc.

Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, I consecrate my entire self to You including my mind. Purify it of anything which opposes holy truth. I submit it in full obedience to You. Please protect me from the pride of self-righteousness and from conforming to this world. Fill my mind with Your light, truth and wisdom. Renew my mind every day and guard my heart in humility. I pray for the gift of discernment. Convict my conscience in the truth so that I may always uphold the truth no matter what other people think. Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for me. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus. www.twohearts.hk