

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the Gospel according to Matthew (*Matthew 18:1-3*)

At that time the disciples approached Jesus and said: "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" He called a child over, placed it in their midst, and said, "Amen, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven." The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection - The Spirituality of Littleness

Spiritual littleness leads to simple faith. Simple faith is strong faith. Simple faith does not demand proof, or a watering down of the more difficult teachings to be more acceptable to one's taste or that of others. The little soul believes simply because divine truths are being revealed to her/him. It has nothing to do with the power of the human intellect. But it involves an open heart and mind which can accept readily the priceless gift of faith God wants to bestow on all His children. The virtue of simplicity is weak in those souls who are tainted with pride and selfishness. Such souls have less inclination to accept Christ, the Eternal Truth because it would involve changing their way of life to conform to Christ's teachings. God is able to use little souls mightily. When Christ was born, God used the simple shepherds to announce to the world the wondrous birth of His Son. It is not only the poor and lowly who are gifted with spiritual littleness. The three wise men/kings from the east who travelled long and dangerous routes to pay homage to the newborn King had simple faith too. They did not allow their wealth, privileged positions in their societies or their high human intellect to detract themselves from things of God but instead harnessed these gifts from God to seek God Himself. They were amply rewarded for their great sacrifice and strong faith.

Spiritual littleness empowers one to trust God completely. Trust is the beautiful fruit of faith and love. The stronger one's love for God is, the stronger the faith and the deeper the trust. We cannot place our trust in someone we do not know or love. Thus, trust in God is a reliable barometer of our faith in and love for God. The trials that God sends us daily essentially test our trust in Him, build up our faith and are necessary for the sanctification of our souls and that of others. To every trial God sends, He makes available the corresponding grace to overcome it. God never tests His children beyond breaking point. *No trial has come to you but what is human. God is faithful and will not let you be tried beyond your strength; but with the trial He will also provide a way out, so that you may be able to bear it (1 Corinthians 10:13).* Our Blessed Mother Mary trusted God with her very life when she answered "yes" to Angel Gabriel who requested her to be the mother of the promised Saviour, knowing that as an unwed mother, she could be subjected to the harsh punishment of being stoned to death.

Spiritual littleness is characterized by humility and is grounded in reality. Humility stems from the truth that we are nothing in the eyes of God. Apart from our sins, is there anything we can claim our own in the eyes of God? Even our very breath is a gift from God. All our good works are cooperation with God's grace, and our good and pure intentions are given by the Holy Spirit. *For God is the One Who, for His good purpose, works in you both to desire and to work (Philippians 2:13).* There is absolutely nothing we can do outside of God's grace. We cannot exist without God's grace. Jesus teaches us a great lesson on humility by His life on earth. Jesus did not cling to equality to the Heavenly Father as something to be grasped but emptied Himself to take the lowly form of a human being and was obedient to God even unto death on the cross of crucifixion (cf. Philippians 2:6-8). Thus, Jesus says: Learn from Me for I am meek and humble of heart (cf. Matthew 11:29). Obviously, Jesus greatly desires us to develop the virtue of humility as it is the solid foundation of the other virtues.

Spiritual littleness embraces God's will. *God wills everyone to be saved and to come to knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4).* God is not merely our Creator but, more importantly, our Heavenly Father as He has gracefully adopted all of us in His good will through Jesus Christ. Thus, we can understand that His greatest desire is the eternal salvation of every one of His children. When our first parents fell from grace, God made a deep personal sacrifice when He sent His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ as an atoning Sacrifice for all sins. Throughout the ages, God gives all necessary help for all His children to gain eternal life through His Son, Jesus Christ Who teaches us how to live so as to attain our eternal reward in heaven, our true home.

Conversation with Jesus: Precious Lord, I come before You as Your little child. As a little child, I have only one simple but important concern: in every present moment, I seek only the approval of God, the One Who loves me the most. I do not seek esteem in human eyes. I embrace the truth of humility which reveals to me where I am in God's eyes and which keeps me humble and grounded in true reality. Thus, I surrender my own will and my human nature to the Divine Will of God. I give You my heart, mind, body and soul, trusting completely in the plans You have for me. Mary, Mother of Salvation, keep me humble and little. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus. www.twohearts.hk