

Scripture Reading

A Reading of the Letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians (Ephesians 6:10-18) *The Armour of God*

Finally, draw your strength from the Lord and from His mighty power. Put on the armour of God so that you may be able to stand firm against the tactics of the devil. For our struggle is not with flesh and blood but with the principalities, with the powers, with the world rulers of this present darkness, with the evil spirits in the heavens. Therefore, put on the armour of God that you may be able to resist on the evil day and, having done everything, to hold your ground. So stand fast with your loins girded in truth, clothed with righteousness as a breastplate, and your feet shod in readiness for the gospel of peace. In all circumstances, hold faith as a shield, to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. With all prayer and supplication, pray at every opportunity in the Spirit. To that end, be watchful with all perseverance and supplication for all the holy ones. The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Reflection: We Are in Spiritual Warfare

Our Real Enemies. The Lord tells us that our real enemies are not human beings but the evil spirits that planned for our eternal damnation. Knowing this, we have to prepare ourselves accordingly. The first step is the important knowledge that we are in constant spiritual warfare till our last breath on earth. However, God is always available to help. The Lord tells us that if we put on the full armour of God, we can stand up and defeat the evil in our lives. **The girdle of Truth** is one of the important parts of God's armour. Am I consciously living in the truth? Is there any deception or falsehood in my life, in my heart that I am not aware of? Is my way of thinking or my lifestyle not in congruence with my faith, or to what the Church teaches? Is my conscience active and well formed to recognise sin for what it is? Am I conformed to this world despite my professed faith through my ignorance, spiritual laziness and indifference?

Breastplate of righteousness. The breastplate protects the heart, a most vital organ. It is only the salvation and righteousness of Christ that put me in right standing with God. Do I distance myself from God by taking my salvation for granted by having unrepented, unconfessed sins? Nothing puts a barrier between me and God except my own unrepented sin. **Feet shod in readiness for the gospel of peace.** How willing and ready am I in bringing the Good News of Jesus to those around me? Through my Baptism and Confirmation, I am sent as an apostle, an ambassador of Christ. Do I realise I am on a divine mission?

The Shield of Faith protects against the attacks of the Evil One that can lead to sin. Will my faith be strong enough to enable me to withstand trials and testing? Do I consciously guard and nurture my faith and interior life by a consistent and sincere prayer life and accepting and carrying my daily crosses and walking in the footsteps of Christ every day of my life? **The Helmet of Salvation.** The helmet protects the head which is a very important part of the body. In order to safe guard our salvation, we need to protect our minds from all kinds of lies, falsehoods, judgemental, impure, unloving thoughts that the Father of Lies will tempt us with. **The Sword of the Spirit** is the Word of God. Do I immerse myself in meditating and putting into practice Sacred Scripture, so that I know and follow God's precepts and laws?

For the armour of God to be effective we need to make prayer our way of life. That is why St. Paul exhorted us to pray without ceasing (cf. 1Thessalonians 5:17). Our prayer life is essentially our relationship with God who alone has the power over all evil. It is only with the power of God that we can stand up to Satan and his evil spirits who have plans for our destruction.

Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, whenever I am wronged, hurt, persecuted and tempted to take revenge help me to remember that my real enemy is not the person causing me the pain but that the real culprits are the spiritual enemies of God – the devil and his evil spirits. The persons who are causing me harm are merely their victims and their instruments. Teach me to put on the full armour of God which is a way of true Christian living. Help me keep my heart and soul pure by availing myself frequently of Confession. This is a very powerful weapon that You have given me in the spiritual warfare against evil. Help me to be spiritually alert by having a sharp and well formed conscience. Help me to live in the truth by learning and living the teachings of the Church and Sacred Scripture, and to resist being conformed to the tastes and standards of this world. Keep me close to my Blessed Mother. Thank You Jesus. Praise You Jesus.