

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the Letter of St Paul to the Ephesians (*Ephesians 4:11-13*)

So Christ Himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip His people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. The Word of the Lord. R. Thanks be to God.

Reflection – Maturing into the fullness of Christ

The role of Mary, our Spiritual Mother. Jesus gives us Mary to be our spiritual mother (cf. John 19:26-27). As Jesus was nurtured by Mary, His Mother from a small human baby to a young adult man, so too we need to be spiritually formed by Mary from a baby Christian to a mature one “attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ”. One of the titles honouring Mary is Mediatrix of All Graces. As the perfect disciple of Jesus, Mary’s will is always in perfect union with God’s. *"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled."* (Luke 1:38). The pure Immaculate Heart of Mary has an intimate union with the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Her Son Who is the Author of all Graces. Coupled with the indissoluble bond with her divine Spouse, the Holy Spirit, our Divine Sanctifier, Mary works in close cooperation with the Holy Spirit to bring about our sanctification through the action of divine graces. St. Augustine calls Mary the living "mold of God". Through Mary is the most secure and easiest way to sanctification and our union with the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

The role of the Sacraments and Daily Mass. In the holy Sacraments are the actions of Jesus Christ through the person of the priest, imparting divine graces to those who receive them in proper disposition. *Grace is the help God gives us to respond to our vocation of becoming His adopted sons. It introduces us into the intimacy of the Trinitarian life (CCC 2021).* The sacraments are indispensable for our sanctification. They are the channels through which divine graces are poured out in torrents upon our souls. All we have to do is to receive the sacrament with fervent faith, ardent desire, love and proper disposition. Through proper reception of the sacraments, we open our hearts, minds and souls for the quiet but immense power of God to purify us, heal us, strengthen us, nourish us, comfort us, sanctify us and give us true peace and rest for our souls. Says St John Vianney: *There is nothing so great, my children, as the Eucharist! Put all the good works in the world against one good Communion; they will be like a grain of dust beside a mountain* (cf. The Catechism of the Cure of Ars, chapter 13). The Mass, the Daily Sacrifice is the principal source of grace that we have on earth.

The Role of the Word of God. It is impossible to over-emphasize the importance of the Word of God in our growth in faith and sanctification. Just as a baby needs to keep hearing the voice of its mother, we need to hear God’s Word every day to keep on the true path. God’s divine truths, His teachings, His commandments are enshrined in His Word. The Word of God stands forever (1 Peter 1:25). It has power over every level of our being: our body, mind, soul and spirit. *For the Word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart (Hebrews 4:12). By the Word of the Lord the heavens were made, their starry host by the breath of His mouth (Ps 33:6).* Through His Word, God reveals to us His divine truths, His mysteries, His ways, His righteousness, His salvation, His love and care for us, His mercy, His will, His thoughts, His constancy and faithfulness.

The role of interior prayer life, sacrifice and good works. Without prayer we can never advance in holiness but will lose whatever little faith we have. Jesus sets the example by constantly retiring to a quiet place to pray to the Father during His time on earth. Without constant communion with God through sincere prayer, we will be evangelized by the world and easily give in to temptations. *Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).* To grow in holiness our lives must reflect the life of Christ on earth. Christ lives to do the will of the Father (cf. John 4:34). We should simplify our lives so that we can give God the time we need to grow in holiness.

Conversation with Jesus: Precious Lord, You give me many aids to grow in holiness so that I can be made fit for Your glorious Kingdom. You gave me Mother Mary so that she can prepare in me the indwelling of the fullness of the Holy Spirit in order that my heart can be joined to Yours. May I consecrate myself to her Immaculate Heart so that through her intercession, I may receive all the graces I need in order to seek first the Kingdom of God. You gave Your Church the sacraments through which You work Your quiet but immense power on my soul. Help me live a sacramental life of grace so that my life may mirror Yours and I can become Your instrument for Your mission on earth, and always stand firm in my faith. Mary, Mother of Salvation, intercede for me. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus. www.twohearts.hk