



Scripture nugget – We are Called to be saints

So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect (Matthew 5:48).

By His Life, Death and Resurrection, Christ merited for us all the graces we need for our sanctification. Saints are not born but they are called. All of us without exception are called to be saints as we are God's children through adoption in Jesus Christ (*cf. Ephesians 1:5*). Holiness is not by our human power but by our cooperation with God's grace. By His Passion, Christ merited for us all the graces we need to be holy. By His wounds we are healed (*cf. Isaiah 53:5*). *For you know the gracious act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that for your sake He became poor although He was rich, so that by His poverty you might become rich (2 Corinthians 8:9)*. The mighty work of God's grace in the conversion and transformation of sinful souls into paragons of holiness is of a higher degree of divine work than that of His creation, as He will not violate our freewill. No matter what spiritual condition we are in or how unworthy we may feel, if we desire it, God can transform us by His grace into holiness befitting our entry into heaven and membership of God's family. The more sinful our soul is, the more we are entitled to God's mercy. When sin is increased, grace abounded all the more (*cf. Romans 5:20*). St Paul, who was formerly a cruel persecutor of the first Christians, through God's grace, was raised up to become one of the greatest and most inspiring missionaries and evangelists, not to mention his brilliant Spirit-inspired writings which continue to guide many Christians.

Greatness versus littleness. St John the Baptist, the fore-runner of Christ, was a great saint entrusted with a very important mission of preparing the people for the coming of Christ. He lived a selfless life of hardship in the desert, ate wild honey and locusts for food, wore garment made of camel's hair, baptized many people and died a martyr for his fearless standing up for the truths of God. Christ testified that John the Baptist was a great saint but added that the soul who makes himself most humble and nothing in the eyes of God is greater than him! (*cf. Matthew 11:11*). An example of a little but nonetheless great saint is St Therese of Lisieux who was declared a patron saint of missions even though she did not step outside her convent. She did not do mighty works in the eyes of people, but her ardent love of and enduring devotion to God in her ordinary daily tasks was exemplary and acknowledged to be very pleasing to God. In the final analysis, God is not necessarily impressed with what impresses man but it is the level of love in the work done and the degree of humility in the heart that do not fail to win God's approval and favour.

Conversation with Jesus. Precious Lord, thank You for creating me to be a saint and a child of God and to share Your glory and Kingdom. God is my eternal Father and heaven is my true home. Help me, like the saints, to abhor sin which is the only thing to separate me from You. May I strenuously avoid occasions of sin like St Benedict who rolled in thorns to get rid of his impure thoughts. Give me the grace never to trivialize or rationalize sin, and to always remember how much You paid for my sins. Help me to be like Mary and Joseph whom God trusted with the care of Baby Jesus, who lived their lives simply and solely for God and were obedient to what God asked of them. Give me a pure, humble and wise heart so that I can focus on pleasing God rather than people. Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for me. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.