

## Scripture Reading

### A Reading of the Second Letter of St Paul to the Corinthians (2 Corinthians 5:6-8)

Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. For we live by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. The Word of the Lord. R. Thanks be to God.

### Reflection ~ Understanding where our feelings come from

**Feelings have a vital role in our world.** In the wilderness, natural instinctive feelings such as hunger and fear have vital roles to play in the survival of the animal. In human beings, however, we are given the grace not to be controlled by our feelings, especially if they are negative, but instead to analyze where they are coming from. Not all feelings are totally from our natural selves. It is important to differentiate feelings which are inspired by the Holy Spirit, which have the purpose of motivating us to do the right thing, or those promoted by unfriendly spirits which have the sole purpose of ultimately leading us into sin. Thus, it is important to confront and deal with our feelings and not ignore or deny it. They can either lead to increased faith and sanctification or into sin.

**Many souls live lives shaped by their inner negative feelings.** Usually, the most common behavior-modifying negative emotions are guilt and fear. Guilt imprisons a soul in its unhappy past and prevents its complete healing. Accusing, false feelings of guilt come about when a soul does not believe that God has really forgiven his/her sins even after sincere repentance. It fails to understand the extent of God's love and the significance of Jesus' Sacrifice on Calvary. This lack of faith brings about feelings of despair. Its false sense of unworthiness from the constant feeling of guilt closes the heart to the many graces God would love to lavish on such a soul to heal it of past brokenness. *As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us (Psalm 103:12). "I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions, for My own sake, and remembers your sins no more." (Isaiah 43:25).* Unlike us, God forgives and forgets readily upon our repentance.

**Feelings should alert us that something needs our attention.** False feelings are based on falsehoods or lack of faith. These are not inspired by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth. Far from allowing these false feelings to influence our behavior, we need to overcome them by our faith. God has not left us alone to deal with the temptations of life. In every present moment we are given a corresponding amount of grace to overcome victoriously any temptation in any form. False, negative feeling that leads to error, confusion and sin must be recognised for what it is. It is a feeling that cannot be pursued as exhorted by St Paul who reminds us that we are led by faith and not by senses or feelings. The Evil One is cunning and can even inspire in weak souls feelings of false humility and false compassion. Ultimately, these negative feelings lead us away from our true selves and put a distance between us and the love of God as their final result is sin. Therefore, we have to be vigilant always.

**Understanding where our feelings and fears come from is half way to overcoming them.** Holy fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (cf. Proverbs 9:10) and works for our sanctification. The other fears are unholy, a result of our imperfect love. *There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love (1 John 4:18).* The origin of our unholy fears must be understood. Could it be due to our pride, fear of humiliation, fear of rejection, fear of suffering rebukes, our lack of faith in God's providence, power, mercy, etc...

### Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, You said to test the spirit by its fruits. Feelings that lead to confusion, error and sin are not from You. These are "arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God" (cf. 2 Corinthians 10:4-5). The weapons I fight with are not the weapons of the world but have divine power to demolish whatever that opposes the knowledge of God (cf. 2 Corinthians 10:4-5). Yes, Your grace is available to me to overcome any temptation (cf. Philippians 4:13). Close my heart and mind to deceit and evil. Strengthen my faith in You. May I always be led by my faith and not by my feelings. May I use my senses and feelings to grow closer to You. Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for me. Thank You, Jesus. Praise, You, Jesus.