

## Scripture Reading

### A Reading from the Gospel according to John (John 15:26-27)

When the Advocate comes, Whom I will send to you from the Father - the Spirit of Truth who goes out from the Father - He will testify about Me. And you also must testify, for you have been with Me from the beginning. The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

### Reflection – We are called not to judge but to witness to the Truth

**Service of and witness to our faith is necessary to our salvation (cf. CCC 1816).** The catechism of our Catholic Church tells us it is not enough merely to have faith but we must profess it proudly and constantly bear witness to it. Our duty towards God is to believe in Him and to bear witness to Him (cf. CCC 2087). Our response to the amazing truths that God reveals to us is to render Him worship, love and loyalty, and also to bear witness to Him. To bear witness to our faith in God is to attest to the truths of the Gospel through our words and actions. Witnessing to our faith in God is not an option but a holy obligation. *Whoever acknowledges Me before others, I will also acknowledge before My Father in heaven. But whoever disowns Me before others, I will disown before My Father in heaven (Matthew 10:32-33).*

**We are called to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world (cf. Matthew 5:13-14).** The source of moral deviations is the ignorance or denial of the existence of God and the rejection of all that He stands for. Witnessing to the Truth oftentimes call for going against mainstream opinion. It may involve speaking up against an untruth presented as a truth, a wrong doing or an evil act when people are silent in the face of it either from fear, indifference or ignorance. A case in point is the courageous witness of John the Baptist. In his zeal for God's Kingdom, John the Baptist risked his own life in telling King Herod that it was wrong of him to take his brother's wife, Herodias, for his own. Through his powerful witness John the Baptist earned the distinction for himself as a glorious martyr of God's Kingdom. He was beheaded. Most of the Apostles of the Lord died as martyrs attesting to the Truth.

**Witnessing calls for courage and zeal for God's Kingdom.** Witnessing can attract persecution when it involves going against public opinion. In the time of Jesus on earth, the crowds preferred to release Barabbas, a criminal responsible for murder, insurgence and robbery (cf. Luke 23:25) over Jesus, the only begotten Son of the Most High. Is it any different in our world today? It would seem the secular masses prefer to embrace anything which appeals to them rather than the Truth which alone can save them. In recent times, our world is growing increasingly hostile to the truths of our God-given faith. We observed, with concern, the aggression with which false ideologies are being promoted especially in the west. However, to those persecuted in His Name, Jesus has this to say: *Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you (Matthew 5:12).*

**Witnessing calls for strong faith and knowledge of our faith.** Scripture warns of those who have little faith. At the conclusion of the parable of the talents Jesus said: *For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them (Matthew 25:29).* The less faith we have, the more likely we are to lose it. This situation is also described in the parable of the sower (cf. Matthew 13). Those with little faith are depicted as those seeds that fall on the path. Because they do not take the efforts to know and understand their faith, it remains shallow and cannot take root. Once the birds come, they are quickly eaten by them. Even if the birds do not eat them, they die a natural death. *My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge... (Hosea 4:6).* Lack of the proper understanding of their faith has resulted in the Jews being misled by their chief priests and elders who were blinded by their pride and self-importance to recognize their long-awaited Saviour when He came amongst them in the flesh.

**Conversation with Jesus:** Precious Lord, through my constant study and meditation of Your teachings and truths, give me a strong understanding of my faith. Make my faith strong so that I can build my life upon Your Word, and always give witness to You by what I think, say and do, and by how I live my life. Give me holy courage whenever I need to speak out against popular opinion in witnessing to Your truth. It is my obligation to bear witness to You and all that You stand for. If I do not do so when the situation calls for it, then by my silence and omission I am part of the error and evil being perpetrated. Bestow upon me a greater measure of Your Spirit of Truth, so that I may always know and recognize the Truth and witness to it. Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for me. Help me to be courageous like John the Baptist. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.