**HOLY WEEK – MONDAY**

**Reflecting on:**

**“God is Love,**

 **Forgiveness**

 **and Mercy”**

Biblical Readings:

 - Psalm 139 - Isaia 43: 1-7

- Hosea 11: 1-4 - Isaia 6: 1-13

- Luke 7: 36-50 - Luke 13: 10-17

- Luke 15: 11-32 - Luke 19: 1-10

- John 4: 1-42 - John 10: 1-21

The love of God is so high, so deep, so large and all-embracing. It can only be felt. No words can describe it in a proper sense. Every moment in one’s life is a grace from God and one is called to live it in his love and protection.

Many times in my own life, I have been rebellious against God like the Israelites in the Old Testament and particularly like my Petron Saint Peter. However, I realise God keeps loving me, because He has called me by my name and I am His. He doesn’t want to lose me. He wants to keep me in His love and He is always faithful to His love for me, even if so many times I have turned my back on Him. He has continued to wait for me to come back so as to embrace me in His arms and tell me that He loves me.

 I know one thing, God does not want to stop my freedom, because He is the Almighty. Rather He lets me use my freedom and learn from my freedom. I know He always watches over me and looks after me. Any time I go astray, He helps me to change and open my heart to discover that He continues to love me.

In my own journey on Day 1, I started my prayer hour in a setting of nature. The trees and wind, the leaves and flowers, the rocks and hills, the sky and cloud... These are all forms of nature’s beauty. These all embrace me and give me a feeling as if God is holding me in His arms. In this sort of setting, I feel warmth in my heart and I sense God is present in me and around me. I feel He smiles on me in the rays of the sun shining through the cloud in the sky. He touches me through the breeze passing by...

 In the ecstacy of joy and sacredness, I think of myself. I look deep down in my soul and feel that I am an unworthy servant of God. I see myself as a sinful creature in God’s presence and I want to say like St. Peter once said to the Lord: “Lord, keep away from me. I am a sinner.”

However, deep down in St. Peter’s heart and mine, I know one thing for sure that: “By your love, my Lord, you forgive me. You forgive me unconditionally. You forgive me and you let me feel your forgiveness. My conversion is a feeling of your love.”

The more I pray, the more I live in your presence. The more I live in your presence, the more you touch me with your love.

O Lord, my God! How can I describe your love? No, I can’t. I can only feel as if I am one with You. My heart vibrates as if I am swimming in the ocean of your love. In a deep repentance, I sense a soft voice in my mind, *“I forgive you and I will forgive you always every time you come back to me, because I love you.”*

Another way to sense the love of God is through the Stations of Cross:

 I look at the Lord Jesus on the Cross. He was nailed up there in a lifeless situation. He died for my sins and the sins of humanity. The sins are nailed down in the cross. His death buried and erased my sins and those of humankind. He rose again to give me a new life.

 In this new life, I read and reflect on a passage of the Gospel about a woman who was a sinner and anointed Jesus’ feet (Lk 7: 36-50). There are a few things that are interesting in her actions:

1. Repentance: Yes! She repented herself and the repentance flourished in her heart for a long time before she came to see Jesus. By the time she heard that Jesus was invited to have a meal in Simon’s house, she decided to buy an alabaster flask of ointment as a visual act of repentance.
2. Tears: Why did she cry? She cried because (1) she was a sinner, (2) everybody looked down on her as an outcast in the society (3) and Jesus loved her.

When reading this passage, I looked at the reactions of Simon and understood her social condition: She was a sinner in the eyes of people and nobody wanted to be close to her. But she came in and touched the feet of Jesus whom everyone considered a prophet and a holy man to be. Then Jesus let her do as she wished without showing any kind of slight or contempt. The love of Jesus touched her feelings and caused a deep emotion in her heart that made her cry. Her tears were those of joy and happiness. She then felt that she recovered her dignity as a human being and she was equal to everyone else in the eyes of Jesus. She wept and bathed Jesus’ feet with her tears as if she wished to let Jesus know that she was very happy and she invited Him to share with her joy. She wiped Jesus’ feet with her hair and kissed them as an act of thanksgiving.

1. Ointment: Together with happiness and joy, the woman anointed Jesus’ feet with perfume. Perfume represents a newness, freshness and nobleness of life. In pouring perfume on Jesus’ feet, the woman invited the Lord Jesus to accept her change of heart, her conversion. From now on, she would be a new person. The words of the Lord Jesus, *“Your sins are forgiven”* (Lk 7: 48) show His acceptance of her conversion.

So, through this passage of the Gospel, I could see two inseparable factors:

1. Repentance of heart is a remedy to cure the wounds of sin in our soul.
2. God’s forgiveness is a gift for a new life. It lifts up the saved sinners to enable them to live in God’s love and light.

Asking for a Grace: *Lord, please help me to realise your love every day of my life.*

 *Amen.*

Life-focus: *God loves me so much. He calls me by my name. I am His (Is 43: 1-7). I thank God with all my heart, with all my mind and with all my soul.*

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