

FEBRUARY 10, 2021
Memorial of St. Scholastica, Virgin
Mark 7: 14-23

“LOVE ALWAYS.”

We consider the heart as traditional symbol for love. We cut an image of a heart to express or give it to someone whom we love and dear to us. It is placed in the middle of our body, as psychologists, counselors or health specialist say, to balance the mind or brain and action or doing (the hands and the feet). But in the opposite side, the hidden aspect of the heart, it can also be the source of hatred, lies, evil intentions that can destroy and damage oneself and others. The heart can be a place for good and evil. This is what our Lord Jesus Christ is telling His disciples and us. “Jesus points His listeners to the source of true defilement - evil desires which come from inside a person's innermost being. Sin does not just happen from external forces. It first springs from the innermost recesses of our thoughts and intentions, from the secret desires which only the individual mind and heart can conceive.”¹ Let us take the example of what happened to Cain and Abel. When Cain had a tremendous feeling of jealousy to his brother Abel, God cautioned him to watch his feelings, what is inside of his heart. As indicated in Genesis: "Sin is lurking at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it."² God warned Cain to overcome evil from his heart, avoid harming his brother but he did not take God's advice to heart. He permitted his jealousy and hatred to dominate and grow in his heart and look for an opportunity to put harm and kill his brother.

My brothers and sisters, when we are confronted with this same situation and feeling, we are jealous, angry, frustrated, and other sinful desires knocking at the door of our heart, how do we deal and respond to it? Do we allow, entertain, and let our heart overtake with it? “One of the great traditional images of our faith has been the Sacred Heart. This image declares that at God's inner core is a totally selfless love, a love revealed fully in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. This greater love is powerfully creative and life-giving. Our own hearts should in some sense reflect the Sacred Heart, with an inner core linked to God's inner core. This vision of our potential echoes

¹ www.dailyscripture.net

² Genesis 4: 7 NRSV Catholic Bible Press USA

in a simple prayer that many of us will have learned at some time: Come Holy Spirit, fill my heart, and kindle in me the fire of your love.”³

Let us look on the life of St. Scholastica, the twin sister of St. Benedict, a saint who loved the Lord so dearly that she offered herself to Christ in prayer and good works. “She founded a religious community for women near Monte Cassino at Plombariola, five miles from where her brother governed a monastery. The twins visited each other once a year in a farmhouse because Scholastica was not permitted inside the monastery. They spent these times discussing spiritual matters. According to the Dialogues of St. Gregory the Great, the brother and sister spent their last day together in prayer and conversation. Scholastica sensed her death was close at hand and she begged Benedict to stay with her until the next day. He refused her request because he did not want to spend a night outside the monastery, thus breaking his own Rule. Scholastica asked God to let her brother remain and a severe thunderstorm broke out, preventing Benedict and his monks from returning to the abbey. Benedict cried out, “God forgive you, Sister. What have you done?” Scholastica replied, “I asked a favor of you and you refused. I asked it of God, and he granted it.” Brother and sister parted the next morning after their long discussion. Three days later, Benedict was praying in his monastery and saw the soul of his sister rising heavenward in the form of a white dove. Benedict then announced the death of his sister to the monks and later buried her in the tomb he had prepared for himself.”⁴ (St. Benedict died 21 March 543, not long after his sister.)

Our Lord does not abandon us in our battle with inappropriate desires and sinful tendencies. He gives us the necessary grace, power, and strength to endure and overcome sin when it couches at the door of our heart. We just need to be aware of it and pray that the hatred, jealousy, envy, and evil desires in our heart be change with love, compassion, understanding, and kindness. Let us choose to love and do what is right, good, just, and wise, and believe to the power of God's love to heal, change, and transform our heart and mind, out total self. Let us ask the intercession of St. Scholastica that we may love always because love wins always and serve the Lord all throughout our lives

³ www.associationofcatholicpriests.ie

⁴ www.franciscanmedia.org