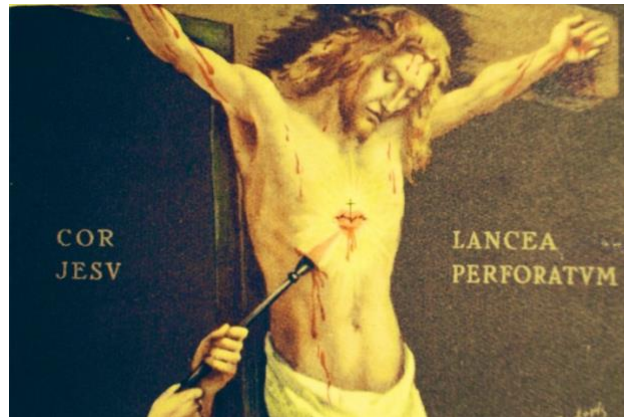




**Prayer for Vocations
June 25, 2021**

For June 25th, I am offering two passages for reflection. You may choose either or both for your personal and community reflection and sharing with one another.



We have just celebrated the Feast of St. M. Sophie on May 25th, 2021 followed by the Feast of the Sacred Heart on June 13th, 2021. Some of us celebrated the Feast with the youth all over the world who participated in the retreat organized for them. A lot of emphasis was given to Jesus' Pierced Heart and our response to Him. We also had a well-written letter of Sr. Barbara Dawson on the Pierced Heart of Jesus and the Pierced Heart of humanity. Recently I was reading the story of Longinus – the one who pierced the Heart of Jesus. For me, it is a heart-touching story. Longinus was an ordinary Roman soldier. His job was basically the execution and care of prisoners. His career was coming to an end due to his failing eyesight. His last assignment was to crucify Jesus. Along with others, he too tortured Jesus brutally as part of his duty. He watched Jesus die. “Unlike other times, this time, the earth shook.” Longinus heard Jesus say from the cross, “It is accomplished.” Longinus is the one who broke the legs of the other two prisoners. Since Jesus was already dead, he took his spear and “pierced His side and at once blood and water came out.” (Jn 19:34) Jesus' heart exploded with blood and water upon this soldier. Longinus was bathed in the blood and water that flowed from His heart. Some of this went into his eyes and Longinus was healed of his eye problem instantly. No doubt, he was shaken like the earth that shook when Jesus died. His healing was more than just physical. In fact, something more than his physical sight. Longinus was given the gift of



faith. He declared in public, “Truly this man was God’s Son.” Mt 15: 39 Later, Longinus was one of the soldiers who was guarding Jesus’ grave. Thus, he witnessed Jesus’ resurrection. He was asked to tell a lie about this – that the disciples of Jesus came and took His body away. Longinus refused to tell this lie. He paid the price for his refusal. Later on, Longinus became a follower of Jesus and for that, he was martyred. Notice the U-turn in this man’s life. The man who took his spear and thrust it into Jesus’s heart after crucifying Him brutally, receives mercy from the Lord. The timing of God’s action is something that always fascinates me. All of us have received God’s unconditional mercy despite hurting Him, ignoring Him and piercing His Heart in different ways. Take a few minutes to look at your life journey. Remember an experience of Jesus’s mercy for you that you cannot forget. Did it change your way of life or are you still the same? Have a dialogue with Jesus regarding this particular mercy. Is there a U-turn in your life for which Jesus is still waiting?

My second passage is Jn 15:16-17 and Jn 1:45-49

“You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give whatever you ask Him in my name.” We have been hearing and reflecting about this passage again and again. This has remained an absurdity for many for all generations. However, for the current generation, it is an unbelievable reality. Today families are small in size, individual freedom is given a top priority, while choices in life, including the choice of religion, availability of choices and options are numerous. Seldom would a person ask herself or himself: “What am I meant to be for God who created me?” To trust unconditionally that God is in charge of us and our future is in His hands requires a true God experience. Today the pandemic is teaching us many hard lessons and many are faced with solid God experiences.

My question to all readers is: Does anyone continue to be a Catholic just by going to church services? Faith is a precious gift which is received “in God’s own time.” Who will receive this gift is also God’s choice and so it is said, “You did not choose me, I chose you.” Are there Catholics/ religious questioning the existence of God? Today faith formation has become a real challenge while dealing with youth. Ask yourself and share with one another: in today’s living context of the young generation, which are the five criteria for selecting a



candidate for the Society of the Sacred Heart? While answering the question, keep in mind John 15: 16-17 and John 1: 45-49.

End your sharing by praying for those who are interested in joining us and by reciting together the prayer for vocations.

For personal reflection:

- Do I have a personal commitment toward encouraging vocations to the Society?
- Reflect on Nathanael's statement, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Do I have similar belief system or bias about vocations?
- What other insight do you get about vocations from these two Gospel passages?

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