

Reflection:

July 2025

KEEP YOUR HEART WITH ALL VIGILANCE...

You can't observe an event in St. Peter's Square without noticing the distinctive attire of the Papal Swiss Guards. Each one takes an oath to serve the Pope faithfully, even to the point of sacrificing his life. Though often seen as colourful symbols by tourists, they are, in fact, a modern security force, combining traditional methods with advanced strategies to protect the Pope from all threats.

We guard only what's valuable! Every country spends millions annually protecting its heads of state. Yet, the Bible speaks of a safeguarding we need to undertake. The wise Solomon wrote, "Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it." (NIV) Let's understand the context: "My child, be attentive to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them escape from your sight; keep them within your heart. For they are life to those who find them, and healing to all their flesh. Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life." (Proverbs 4:20-23)

The inspired word here encourages us to attune our hearts to God's Word, for it truly brings life and healing. For a Swiss Guard, his diligent attitude stems from the solemn oath he took to protect the Pope. Likewise, unless we have consecrated our hearts to God, we will lack the urgency to guard them with vigilance. "Keeping the heart" means regularly nourishing it with the Word of truth. Consistent meditation on the Word of God will steadily influence and guide our intellect in reasoning, making sound judgements, and fostering wise decision-making. The quality of our lives will improve tremendously as we begin to make better choices guided by the light of truth.

To guard our hearts, we need to understand them. Each heart has its own strengths and vulnerabilities. Some may be inclined toward anxiety, fear, sensual pleasures, the pursuit of achievement, personal goals, or constant new experiences. While inclinations towards good ought to be nurtured, those that are detrimental need intentional guidance. An anxious person who immerses himself in the Word of God learns to process his thoughts and emotions more clearly. With an intellect shaped by truth, he learns not to be ruled by anxiety but to redirect it toward the assurance of being under the care of a loving Father. Like a Swiss Guard, a person with a diligent heart allows entry only to thoughts that align with the Word he constantly meditates upon.

In today's digital age, we are continually flooded with entertainment and information. A culture that celebrates instant gratification and self-promotion often appeals directly to our emotions and desires. Our own inner wounds and weaknesses can leave us especially vulnerable to these influences. Rather than choosing the demanding path of truth and wisdom, we may find the road of fleeting pleasure and quick fixes far more tempting.



Jesus calls us to embrace the narrow path, to make mature choices. That's why, for us in Jesus Youth, the Word of God is our foundational pillar. When we incline our hearts not toward its weaknesses but diligently focus on the life-giving Word, we grow into mature and courageous ambassadors of the Kingdom. This is indeed an ongoing formation. The alternative is to live with unguarded hearts, allowing them to drift into selfish pursuits—just as King Solomon did. Though he knew the importance of guarding the heart and even wrote about it, he failed to persevere in living it out. The question remains for us: “Will we?” Do we truly give to our hearts the same infinite value that God gives to them?

