



CLOTHE YOURSELVES WITH JESUS CHRIST

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

ROMANS 13:14

Monthly Reflection:

March 2023

The Word of God that turns coal into gold is still alive and active today. In his autobiography, St. Augustine, who cast aside the frivolities of life when touched by the Word of God, describes his old life thus: “The inclination of sin and the disordered passions of youth obscured and darkened my soul so that I could not discern the beauty of love from the muddy darkness of lust.” One evening, as he was fervently praying for God’s mercy in a garden, St. Augustine, who realized that only God could redeem him from the darkness he experienced, heard a voice saying, “Take and read.” And the verse from scripture that lifted him to the aromatic heights of sanctity is the theme of our meditation for the month – “Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.”

Every morning we change out of our night clothes and dress for the day ahead, and what we wear influences how we behave. We choose our outfits to suit the occasion or the kind of day ahead of us. If our day demands outdoor work or sport, we dress accordingly and we are not too concerned about getting our clothes soiled. On the contrary, if we were to dress in white, we would take extra care to keep it spotless, and check twice before we sit down or lean against anything. Even the smallest stain or speck would bother us and our only thought would be how to get rid of it. And if we are not careful, it wouldn’t be long before our white clothes get filthy and we become a laughing stock.

Here St. Paul who compares the old life to the night and our new life in Christ to the day, comes across as a disgruntled father, annoyed to see his children sleeping into the day. The apostle reminds the church that it is time to wake up from slumber, for when, like the rays of the morning sun, the love of Jesus caresses us, how can we sleep on under the blanket of selfishness? We must conduct ourselves in a manner befitting children of the light.

To walk in the light, we need to keep two things in mind: be clothed with the Lord Jesus Christ and not let bodily desires overpower our thoughts. When we consciously accept Jesus as Our Lord and Saviour, we will be alert and cautious about the way we walk and conduct ourselves, just as when we are clothed in white. Haven’t we observed priests who visit homes to give communion? They are not distracted by anything around them; rather, they walk in prayerful silence. Likewise, when we are clothed with Christ, the awareness that He is within us will help us to go about doing good. The constant awareness of the presence of God will help us to avoid all occasion of sin and inspire us to live holy lives.

What does St. Paul intend when he says, “clothe yourselves with Jesus Christ”? Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience (Colossians 3:12). Quite clearly, he means that we put on the garment of Christ’s nature. In other words, we should be so immersed in Jesus that we reflect the characteristics of a child of God who has moved from darkness to light. All of you baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ (Galatians 3:27). This frequent and necessary reminder reinforces the conviction that we belong to Christ. When our thoughts and dreams are governed by the Spirit (Romans 8:6), there is no room in our mind for worldly desires.

How should we carry ourselves in these clothes? Like Joseph who sported his long sleeved garment with pride. God, in his infinite mercy, clothed us with Christ in baptism. We are very likely bound to be scorned and ignored by many if we do not conform to the ways of the world. Joseph serves as a model for us in the way he proudly wore the garment that signified his father’s love, brushing aside the hatred of his brothers. That we who believe in Christ and bear his name (Jesus Youth) should live as Christ-bearers is the need of the hour. To prevent darkness from covering the world, we need to put on and radiate Christ, the light of the world. Like St. Augustine, let us take the word and read it. Let’s live it. This will order our emotions, bring clarity to our souls, and steadily enable us to become more Christ like in our disposition.

.....
Renny Joseph Njarakulam

Renny, who has been active in Jesus Youth for more than three decades, is a school teacher and an animator of the Kerala Council. He lives in Kozhikode with his wife Mini and four children

