



04 November 2022

Holy Hour

(The Theme and reflections dedicated to Children's Day)

"Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs." Mt 19:14

Hymn: no. 122. Father, We Adore You. (*Joyful Celebration*) or any other appropriate one.

(Pause... for Moments of Silent and Personal Adoration before the Eucharistic Lord)

Introduction: Psalm 127: 3 says, “*Children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward*” Every child is the statement of God’s delight in His creation. The Gospels reveals God’s soft spot for children. He’s gentle and kind with them, and passionate about protecting them from harm. In Mt18:1-5, Jesus called a child the greatest in God’s Kingdom. As adults, we have the privilege and responsibility to help children live the ‘full and abundant life’ that God desires for them. Sadly today, warfare, natural and manmade calamities separate countless children from their families, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation, diseases and premature death. How children absorb, understand, respond or react to their environment are all critical factors to who they become as adult citizens. During this holy hour, we pray for all the children in the world, particularly for the safety of children working in hazardous conditions.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, truly present here in the Eucharist, body, soul and divinity, we adore you, worship you, and glorify you. You are the author and origin of all life. The Psalmist rightly says, “*For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb*” (Ps 139:13-14). You have blessed men and women with the privilege of cooperating with you in bringing forth new life into the world. You have imparted in our hearts the instinct to nurture and protect life at all its stages. May we accept the gift of children as a sacred trust. Fill all of us with awe and reverence for the miracle of life and do all we can to preserve, protect and promote human life and dignity. May the laughter of children fill every home. May their innocence, energy, carefree nature, and forgiving spirit teach us the true essentials of living a happy life. Amen.

Hymn: 363. Spirit of the living God fall afresh on me. (*Joyful Celebration*)

Scripture Reading: Matthew 19: 13-15

(Pause.... for few moments after the Scripture reading)

We shall also listen to an inspiring *excerpt from the writings of Kahlil Gibran on Children from the Book 'The Prophet'*

ON CHILDREN by Kahlil Gibran

“Your children are not your children.
They are the sons and daughters of life’s longing for itself.
They come through you but not from you,
And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.

You may give them your love but not your thoughts,
For they have their own thoughts.
You may house their bodies but not their souls,
For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow,
Which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.
You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you.”

Reflection:

“*It is to such as these, that the Kingdom of Heaven belongs.*” What qualities in children make them worthy of Heaven? Which are the childhood qualities we might have lost, as we grew into adulthood? Could it be their hearts free of malice, their vulnerability, openness, inclusiveness, lack of prejudice, their gratitude and joy for the little things? Perhaps it might be time to ask the Lord to rekindle a childhood quality that might enable us to love all and beloved. The gesture of the parents in the Gospel teaches us to be responsible for the growth of children in our family and in our society. The little ones in the Gospel teaches us the Spirit of Receptivity! The attitude of the Disciples represents the reality of a negative side in us; an attitude of refusal, discrimination, exclusion or even outright rejection which we need to avoid.

Sometimes in our ministry, we can fall a prey to glamour, focusing all our attention on reaching out to the affluent, the powerful, the rich benefactors, or those that brings immediate and gratifying results and neglect ministering to the “Children” the lowly, the faceless, voiceless and vulnerable ones who need ministering much more. Finally, Jesus represents the universal love and acceptance, the Spirit of restoration and redemption that embraces all.

Hymn: No 351. Sing life, sing love, sing Jesus (*Joyful Celebration*) or any other.

(Pause... for *Silent Self-examination of conscience in the light of the Gospel and the reflections*)

Do we take our children to Jesus? Do we care for the spiritual, moral and character formation of our children as much as we care about their tuitions or their extra-curricular activities?

What is our attitude towards children? Are they a hindrance to our career, comfort and economic independence? Or do we welcome children into our lives as gifts and an honoured responsibility?

Do we impose our views and pressurize our children to live our unfulfilled dreams or are we helping them to discover and live the dreams of their own?

General Intercessions:

Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

Every new born is a tangible sign of God's infinite love for humanity. We pray that all parents may welcome and love the gift of children from God as responsible stewards. For this we pray; **R/-**

We pray for millions of children who are working in mines, factories, constructions, and other works, under conditions endangering health and safety that they be soon rescued. For this we pray; **R/-**

We pray that God gives us a peaceful home where children feel safe and secure, and where they learn how to share, respect others, and live in harmony and joy. For this we pray; **R/-**

We pray for war zone countries where children and youth are also forced to join armed rebel groups or other anti-social activities. May the world leaders find a peaceful solution to all cross-border conflicts and rivalries. For this we pray; **R/-**

The Divine Praises:

Hymn no **14.** (*Joyful Celebration*)

Closing Hymn:

DOWN IN ADORATION FALLING

(*Let us bow in adoration Tune*)

Down in adoration falling,
Lo! the sacred Host we hail;
Lo! O'er ancient forms departing,
Newer rites of grace prevail;
Faith for all defects supplying,
Where the feeble senses fail.

To the everlasting Father,
And the Son who reigns on high,
With the Holy Spirit proceeding
Forth from each eternally,
Be salvation, honour, blessing,
Might and endless majesty.

**-Commission For Liturgy
Archdiocese of Bombay.**