

## **We need to convert our pains and suffering into the cross of Christ**

***Dear beloved parishioners,*** Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ. I hope and pray all is good with you all.

On September 14, the catholic church celebrates the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross and On September 15, the feast of Mother of Sorrows.



The meaning of the word **Cross- Christ Rescued Our Sinful Souls.**

Ann Thomas tells this story of herself. She was at a garage sale with her friend Betty. Ann had just sorted through a tray of trinkets. Betty came up and asked, "Any luck?" "No!" said Ann. "It's just a pile of junk." She stepped aside to let Betty see for herself. Betty took one look at the pile, picked up a tarnished old cross and said, "I can't believe it. I have found a treasure! This cross is made of antique silver." When Betty got home, she cleaned the cross and polished it. Later Betty's seven-year-old son, Bobby picked up the cross, held it reverently in his hands and looked at it for a long time. Suddenly he began to cry. "What's wrong?" asked Betty. Bobby said, "I can't help it. I was looking at Jesus on the cross.

Ann ended the story saying, three people looked at the same cross. I only saw junk; Betty saw a treasure and Bobby saw Jesus. The Feast of Exaltation of Holy Cross reminds us to see Jesus and appreciate the price he paid for our salvation each time we look at a cross for two reasons: 1. To understand the history of the True Cross and 2. To appreciate better the importance of the symbol and reality of Christ's sacrificial love, namely, the cross in the daily life of every Christian.

The Cross of Jesus is the symbol of self-surrendering love. The Crucifix /Cross is the symbol of God's loving and sacrificial offering of Himself in a humble and total self-emptying love for all of us. It represents the cross-

bearing Christ leading us in our life's journey of pain and suffering, carrying his heavier cross and still encouraging us, strengthening us and supporting us.

Constantine won the battle over Maxentius. Indebted to the God of Christians for his victory at the Milvian Bridge, October 28, AD 312, Constantine became a Christian catechumen. The Emperor issued the Edit of Milan (in 313), guaranteeing Christian's religious tolerance throughout the Roman Empire. He declared Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire and commanded that the sign of the cross be placed on all the Roman standards and on the shields of all the soldiers.

We generally speak of crosses given by Nature (disease like this COVID19, natural disasters, death) crosses involved in doing our duties faithfully, crosses given by the others and crosses we create for ourselves. Now, the question is how should we carry our crosses?

We should not carry crosses cursing our fate as does the donkey carrying its heavy load or expecting a heavenly reward as a hired worker works for his wages. We are taught to offer these sufferings with Jesus to the Father as gifts of love, in reparation for our sins and the sins of the world. The true spirit of carrying our crosses is to do so like a loving spouse who nurses his/her paralyzed spouse or sick child with sacrificial love and dedicated self-surrender.

We need to convert our pains and suffering into the cross of Christ, may be by accepting the sacrifice and suffering involved in helping others and sharing our blessings with others, may be by welcoming the pain involved in controlling our evil habits and tendencies and in practicing our faith and may be by serving others with sacrificial, agape love and commitment like a loving spouse who nurses his/her sick child or spouse.

So, let us approach our cross not with sorrow but with joy, not as a symbol of death but of life, not as a cause for fear but of hope, not as an instrument of cruelty and hatred but of eternal love. And this how Our Blessed Mother approached all her crosses in her life from the time of her consumption of Jesus in her womb to Jesus death on the Cross (The Mother of Sorrows). She kept all her suffering in her heart and focused on doing God's will. She did not expect any reward for her suffering, but God rewarded her the joy of her Son's resurrection. Our Blessed Mother Mary is the model for all of us

to carry our crosses humbly and patiently. Let us pray and try to follow the footsteps of Our Blessed Mother Mary. **Happy Feast of Exaltation of The Cross and the Feast of Mother of Sorrows. See you all in the Church.**

**Be Blessed and Be a blessing to others.**

Fr. Arul Yagappan, MSFS, M.A (Sociology), B.Ed.