

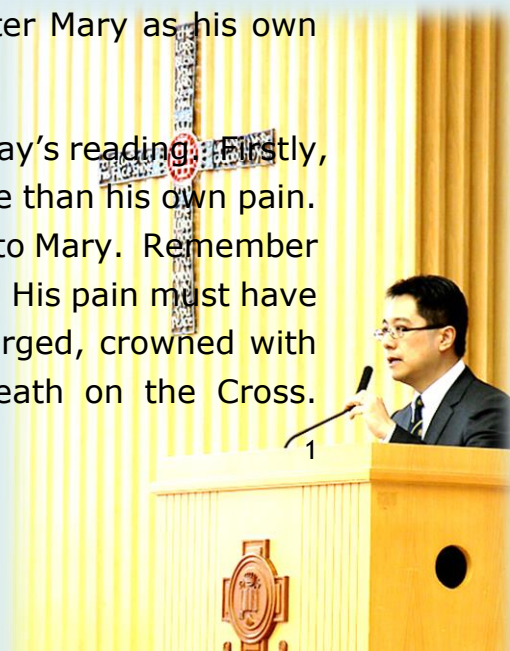
Triumph of the Cross

The theme of this week is "The Triumph of the Cross." The word "triumph" means a great success or victory, as in "a magnificent triumph over the enemies." The famous landmark in Paris, l'Arc de Triomphe (or the Arch of Triumph) was built for French armies to parade through after successful military campaigns. Yet, what do we mean by the "triumph of the Cross? How triumphant can the Cross be?

The Cross is a symbol of death and there are usually lots of them in cemeteries. The Cross is also associated with suffering and punishment. In Roman times crucifixion was a cruel and humiliating punishment for slaves and criminals who committed heinous crimes. The condemned was nailed to the Cross and suffered a slow and painful death. However, when Jesus was crucified on the Cross, he had triumphed over death because he had been resurrected. He had transformed death into life, animosity into reconciliation.

The reading today is taken from the Gospel according to Saint John (John 19:25-30) and it provides a snapshot of what happened when Jesus was crucified. Jesus saw his own mother at the foot of the Cross weeping, crushed and broken-hearted. He had compassion on her. He then turned to the disciple that he loved, who we believe is John the Apostle, and asked him to look after Mary as his own mother.

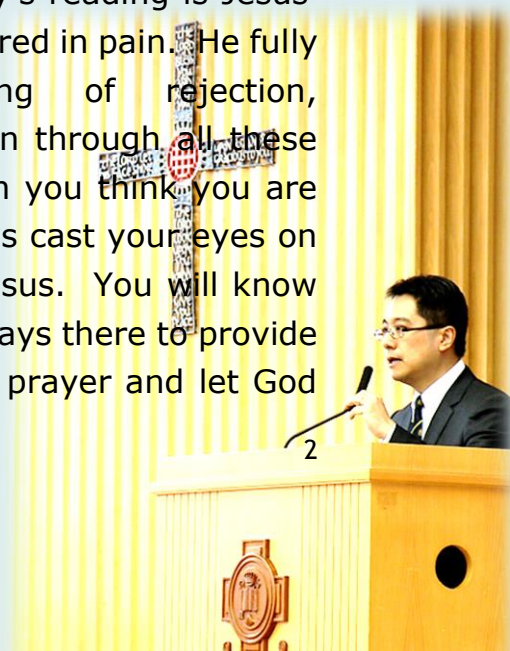
There are two things that we can learn from today's reading: Firstly, Jesus cared about the needs of his mother more than his own pain. He looked beyond his own suffering to minister to Mary. Remember that Jesus was nailed to the Cross at that time. His pain must have been excruciating. Physically, Jesus was scourged, crowned with thorns and left to die a slow and painful death on the Cross.



Emotionally, he was mocked by soldiers, forsaken by his people and betrayed by his disciples, humiliated and put on public display. You can imagine how unbearably draining it must have been for anyone in this situation. Yet, when Jesus saw his mother at the foot of the Cross, he was only thinking about whether she would be well cared for after his death.

We often have our problems - an argument with mum or dad, a quarrel with a good friend, time management problems, stress from tests and school work and many others. Yet sometimes we tend to use a magnifying glass to look at our own problems. Our problems are always bigger than others' because they are OUR problems. We moan and groan about the unfairness we received, we complain about not being understood. We are so engrossed with our own frustration and anger that we are often blind to the needs of the people around us. We do not realise that there may be people, people sitting around us, who are in distress, who are quietly in tears, who have their own difficulties to deal with. Rather than always wanting to be understood, why not reach out and try to understand others? Rather than always wanting to be comforted, why not try to comfort others and extend our care to those whose hearts and spirits are hurting? For it is in giving that we receive. We will then realise that our own problems are not that impossible to handle and we will also learn to be grateful for whatever we have now.

The second thing that we can learn from today's reading is Jesus' compassion. Jesus died on the Cross and suffered in pain. He fully understands our frustration, our feeling of rejection, disappointment and grief because he has been through all these when he was crucified on the Cross. So when you think you are alone, when you think you are wronged, always cast your eyes on the Cross and think about the crucifixion of Jesus. You will know that Jesus understands and he cares. He is always there to provide for you. Just present your worries to God in prayer and let God



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comfort you. Before I finish, I would like to share two verses that I like with you. The first one is taken from Psalm 116:5

“The Lord is gracious and righteous; our God is full of compassion.”

The second one is taken from the Letter to the Philippians 4:6-7.

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

I hope you will find strength in the Cross.

Thank you.

Mr. Dennis Yuen

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