

Spiritual Reflection – May 2014

“Once more, have the courage to raise the cross high. Do not break down beneath it. Let us look at the Mother of the Seven Dolors. She stood under the Cross. She stood upright. That which should have crushed her held her upright – the wounds and the blood of Jesus. There for the first time we see the truth fulfilled that we are healed and strengthened in the wounds of the Redeemer”

(Mary Frances of the Cross Amalia Streitl, Letters to Father John Francis Jordan 1883-1885, 26[16],4)

Many of us may never have to bear a physical cross in the same manner as Jesus Christ, yet we do have to carry either some emotional or psychological cross/burden from time to time.

I can recall journeying with my mother who suffered from acute dementia and who eventually died from so many complications. To me that was a cross, initially it was difficult to raise it. The more I struggled to accept it, the more the cross appeared to be crushing me. However, when I finally embraced the situation in my helplessness and decided to pray with it, to see my mother beyond her sickness rippled body, it was easier to care for her, to pray with her, and more so to embrace her journey, especially in her final days. Yet it was my journey, my invitation to bear up under the cross in my helplessness, to stand upright and to stand in faith – I affirm the statement *“that which should have crushed her held her upright”*.

At times, we may want to throw down our cross or to hand it to others especially when the situations seem so helpless and may be breaking us down. While it may appear to be our human response, we are encouraged to seek the intercession of Mary, the Woman of Sorrows. She indeed is our best example of standing upright in the midst of affliction. What appeared to be helplessness for her in the sight of others was indeed her greatest strength; she totally surrendered to the will of God.

With Mary and Jesus that which may appear to crush us, will certainly provide foundation for us to be well grounded. With the right attitude we will be strengthened in and by our pain, and will therefore be able to raise the cross high. Just as Jesus’ cross brought salvation to the world, our cross can bring life to others as we stand in faith with those who are invited to bear their cross.

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