

Our lives are a work of Art



"We are God's **work of art** created in Christ Jesus to **live** the good **life** as from the beginning God had meant us to **live** it." (Eph. 2: 10)

Dear Sister,

All of us experience major and minor life challenges. Our life is formed and sculpted by our joys and sorrows, our heartaches and happiness. It is in this process that we become a work of art¹ says Deacon Derick Cranston. Throughout our life, we weave a tapestry made of the fabric of our prayers, our works, our joys and our sufferings. Every strand of this fabric consists of the moments that make up our life and define who we are. The shades and hues of the tapestry we weave reveal our inner essence. If you look hard enough, we will find that our inner essence is love. And love is what makes life worth living. What a dark place this would be if we did not have love.

Our Risen God who loves us sees us through the light of His love. And He reveals the beauty within us, whether we realize it or not. We become even more beautiful when we face daily challenges and if we can transform them into acts of love. Christ's beauty became manifest when He suffered and died upon the cross because of His love for us.

¹ Carston. D. 2017. Catholic Messenger 2017

When we develop a personal relationship with the Jesus, we discover how He wants us to respond to any given situation.

How can we release this work of art inside us?

When we let the hand of Jesus guide our actions, the beautiful work of art inside of us begins to take shape in us with the help of Him who loves us unconditionally. When we realize that Jesus is the artist and we are but His instrument, then the beauty within us starts to emerge. The beautiful work of art within each of us is eternal. Life can be very painful at times. We can lose our perspective and see only the pain in our life. However, the pain will pass, but the beauty...the beauty will last forever.

Suffering is inevitable. We all face periods of grieving when we experience something painful (a death, a relationship breakup, a job loss, etc.). The intensity of pain varies from person to person and the reality of each situation. When we stay with the pain over a prolonged period of time it may lead to suffering and to get back to normal life is a challenge. Human as we are, we tend to see our life through the lens of pain and sorrow. But Jesus with His everlasting love sees us in a different way.

The crucified and risen Lord will be with us, no matter how badly we suffer, fail and feel. Jesus said, "Behold I am with you always until the end of the age." Matthew 28:16:20

It is through His death and resurrection that Jesus taught us the meaning of true suffering/the Cross and our need to grow in Christian faith. How often do we struggle to believe in God when things are going well? How much more do we need to remember that God is with us, even in our sufferings?

To the person of deep Faith, challenges are steppingstones to loving intimacy with Jesus - real meaning of our call to the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Cross.

In the early years of challenging times Mother Bernarda always tried to strengthen her sisters on the road of faith when she admonished and comforted them saying " **remain cheerful in the midst of your sufferings, for one day they will be your joys**". "Take courage and trust"

she wrote to Sr. Agnes. May her words echo in our hearts too while faced with challenges as we journey through life.

From a faith perspective the Cross becomes for us the symbol of life, triumph and strength. This is precisely how the Cross and the crucifixion transforms suffering to something precious and that has the potential for life to blossom. If we let our suffering be transformed, then we are in a better position to experience Divine Presence in ourselves. Our aim is to learn to transform our entire lives into one joyous expression of Divine Presence.

Journaling with Divine presence can help a lot. Spending time for self-reflection and recalling what life is all about, and why we are being called or chosen etc, will take us to a very positive track to move on with great courage. The spiritual greatness in our lives are certainly the result of a conversion and cooperation with the grace of the Crucified and Risen Christ. It is Jesus who transforms and keeps us always close to Him.

With His grace and self-understanding, we need to plant the seeds of compassion in our hearts. When we are able to live compassionately and let go of suffering and self-judgment, then we are far more capable of showing compassion toward others and we are more fully able to practice thoughts of kindness, speak words of kindness, and offer acts of kindness to ourselves and others.

Embracing the daily events with the help of God's grace enable us to be renewed everyday as it links us with Christ. He will never let us walk alone. Strength comes from Him when we listen to Him with the ear of faith. Humbly speaking life may be hectic but spiritually speaking life is joyful when we fix our eyes on the Lord.

“When we journey without the cross when we build without the cross, when we profess Christ without the cross, we are not disciples of the Lord, we are worldly” says Pope Francis

Discipleship has to do with trusting in His divine love. Jesus journeys with us and we journey with Him. As followers of Jesus we look at the

cross always and remember that Jesus has loved us despite our weaknesses and failings. Life comes with the cross and the cross offers us the challenge to love. Jesus's ways are not our ways; therefore, all the challenges of daily life can be transformed into joy. The same resurrection power that brought Jesus from death to life is available to us, and if we channel it, we will see amazing transformation in our own life too. Let our encounter with the crucified and risen Jesus transform us daily....

Pope Francis prayed to Mother Mary to help us

“to become witnesses of Christ wherever we are, with a new life,
transformed by His love.”

Let us look at all challenges as great opportunities to bring hope. The current society needs our Transforming Presence.

Reflection:

- Where has my suffering been transformed into a living blossom?
- Where have I met the Crucified and Risen Lord in the experiences of my life and my mission?

May Jesus give us the deep Faith to embrace our daily Challenges

Our warmest wishes for a fruitful Feast of the Exaltation
of the HOLY CROSS.

Sr. Fatima

Sr. Fatima Puthenthoppil
On behalf of CLT

Feast of Holy Cross 2020