

MARCH 2019: STRENGTHENS US TO BEAR THE CROSS

By DENNISHEW in BEC January 22, 2019

PMPT THEME 2019: BAPTISED AND SENT

MARCH SUB-THEME: Strengthens Us to Bear the Cross

FOCUS: Whatever weariness and pain we may experience in living the commandment of love and following the way of justice, the cross remains the source of our growth and sanctification. (Gaudete et Exultate, Rejoice and Be Glad, no. 92)

Opening Prayer:

+Invite someone to pray or use the "Prayer to the Holy Spirit" on p.2

OPENING SONG: Victory (O Cross, reign victorious F.10)

O Cross, reign victorious!

O Cross! Thou wilt redeem us

For all who yearn to see,

Give light, let darkness cease

True source of liberty

O Cross, God's seal of peace

Renew our strength and valour

Uplift the downcast man

Prize hope in life's dark hour

To deathless Life the span

Through Thee our heav'nly Father,

Take us to his embrace

Let man greet man as brother

In Him who saved our race

DIALOGUE

Thomas who was married to a Catholic for 15 years, accompanied his wife to church occasionally over the years. A few years ago, he felt that there was something missing in his life and contemplated baptism into the Catholic faith. He was inspired by the friendship and warmth his family had with the priest, as well as with the basic ecclesial community. Finally, he decided to join the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) programme in 2016.

Initially it was an interesting journey but as it progressed, he encountered difficulties and doubts surfaced as to whether he had made the right decision. A couple of times, Thomas almost gave up owing to mounting pressures at home as well as at work.

Thomas persisted and was glad that he received the gift of Baptism last Easter. It was only after his Baptism, that he became aware his wife possessed great strength in her faith in Jesus Christ. He became conscious that his wife always turned to God in all her trials and difficulties in their married life. He felt that it was through her prayer that he managed to persevere in the RCIA last year.

Now he always has great faith and trust in Jesus when he faced difficulties and struggles. Jesus's suffering, death and resurrection convinced him that he too can overcome all the trials and tribulations of life.

Buzz in groups of three

What are some awareness/actions of Thomas that has helped him in times of doubts and difficulties?

What are some of the things that Thomas was able to 'SEE CLEARER' after his Baptism? How is this possible?

DISCERNMENT

BIBLICAL TEXT: 2Cor 12:9-10

QUIETEN Ourselves – ask the Holy Spirit for openness of mind & heart to Christ in the Word

READ the text aloud and LISTEN with openness

READ it silently by yourself until a word or phrase touches or strikes you. Write it down.

REFLECT on 'what the word/phrase says?'

What is the Holy Spirit saying to me through the word or phrase that I chose? Write it down

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What do I say to the Lord in response to his Word? Write it down

Share in small groups (3-4 persons) on # 4, # 5 and #6

DISCERN in silence – What conversion of mind, heart and life is the Lord asking of me?

DEEDS

Facilitator connects the “Monthly Theme”, “Dialogue’, “Discernment”, and the “sharings”.

In silence, sense within our hearts a movement that invites us to make our lives a gift for others in charity

What specific DEED is the Lord opening before us?

We share our task with one another, confident that our Lord moves us to do His work.

+Closing Prayer

Pray spontaneously or use the “MISSION PRAYER” with Mary on p.15

Closing Song: Old Rugged Cross (J.30)

On that old rugged cross

So despised by the world

Has a wondrous attraction for me

For the dear Lamb of God

Left His glory above

To bear it to Calvary

Chorus:

So I'll cherish the old rugged cross
Till my trophies at last I lay down
I will cling to the old rugged cross
And exchange it some day for a crown

To the old rugged cross
I will ever be true
It's shame and reproach gladly bear
Then He'll call me some day to my home far away
Where His glory forever I'll share.

+ (Mission Prayer): With Mary, we pray

Mary, Virgin and Mother, you who, moved by the Holy Spirit,
welcomed the word of life in the depths of your humble faith:
as you gave yourself completely to the Eternal One, to the urgent call,
as pressing as ever, to proclaim the good news of Jesus.

....

Obtain for us now a new ardour born of the resurrection,
that we may bring to all the Gospel of life
which triumphs over death. Give us a holy courage to seek new paths,
that the gift of unfading beauty may reach every man and woman.

Give us a holy courage to seek new paths,
that the gift of unfading beauty may reach every man and woman.

Virgin of listening and contemplation.

Mother of love, Bride of the eternal wedding feast,
pray for the Church, whose pure icon you are,
that she may never be closed in on herself
or lose her passion for establishing God's kingdom.

Star of the new evangelization,
help us to bear radiant witness to communion,
service, ardent and generous faith,
justice and love of the poor,
that the joy of the Gospel may reach to the ends of the earth,
illuminating even the fringes of our world.

Mother of the living Gospel,
wellspring of happiness for God's little ones,
pray for us. Amen. Alleluia!

(cf Evangelii Gaudium, The joy of the Gospel, no. 288)