

*"Let the holiness of God shine forth" (cf. Mt 5, 16)*

item 402

### **mother's pain – others' gain**

Every mother rejoices when her child achieves something special. Every child runs first to its mother to get appreciation. It is the mother who grieves the most when her child is in trouble and the child always looks up to the mother for comfort.

#### **A pleasant revelation**

"When his parents saw him, they were astonished" (Luke. 2:48). That was the moment when Joseph and Mary found Jesus in the temple, sitting among the scripture scholars, to their great relief and happiness. But they had to pay a heavy price for this happiness. After the Feast of the Passover, Joseph and Mary had travelled back home for a day together with the caravan, which would be about 20 miles. Then they realized Jesus was not with them. The disappointment, worry and the mental pain they experienced for three days before finding Jesus would have been immeasurable. They left everything behind and hurried back frantically, seeking help from everyone on the way.



Mother Mary was blessed to see her son grow and become strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him. (Luke. 2:40). This period could very well be one of the happiest moments for the Holy family. There is no information about Jesus ever getting sick, about his education or whether Mary had moments of worry.

#### **Behind the divine mission**

Once Jesus entered public life at the age of 30, as per the Jewish custom in those days, his visits home would have been rare. Like all mothers Mary also would have wanted her son to be within her sight at all times. But that was not to be as he became an itinerant preacher. Though Mary was not moving with him, she would have been kept informed about his movements, his work and growing popularity. She would have been concerned and worried about the powerful forces growing against him. In Mark 3. 3-35 we see Mary trying to meet her son.

## **Powers of darkness**

Finally, the news of the arrest of Jesus in Jerusalem would have been a great shock to Mary. She was probably alone as Joseph had passed away by that time. Mary was perhaps not near the scene. That night and the day after would have been the most traumatic time in her life and that of any other mother in a similar situation. To be with her son in a time of danger is the desire of every mother.



## **The painful encounter**

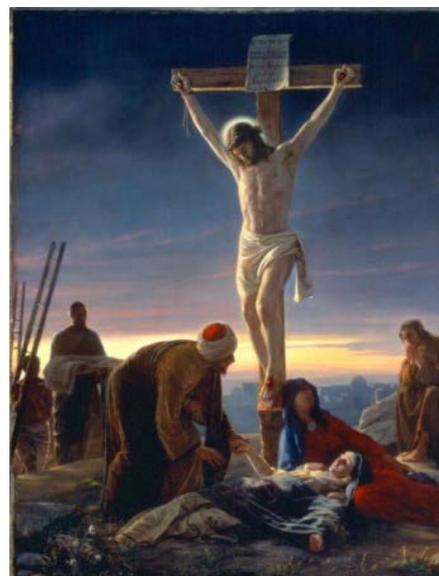
Mary braved her way into the scene where the greatest tragedy in human history was unfolding. How could one describe the situation when a mother sees her son being led as a criminal for execution? How much would have gone through their minds when their eyes met. Her dearest son was being brutally assaulted and humiliated to the point of death, surrounded by a bloodthirsty crowd with nobody around to help. After seeing all this it was a miracle that the mother did not collapse. Maybe she did. She followed the tragic journey to Golgotha along with a few women companions.

What would be the state of a mother who had to watch the last drop of blood oozing out of her son's body? How could she bear the pain of seeing him take the last breath of his life with her own eyes? Yet, Mary had to face that situation. And then his lifeless body was placed on her lap, eyes closed, emaciated, blood dried up all over his body, a thorny crown struck deep into his head, clothes torn down, exasperated, dehydrated and motionless. Torrent of tears would have rolled over his body. It is the worst situation any mother would ever want to face. Mary had it all in fullness. No mother can stand to see her child die in front of her own eyes. Her helplessness would have added to her consternation and grief.

The loneliness and emptiness Mary experienced after Jesus was gone would have been really pathetic. It is estimated that Mary was probably 48 years old at the time. To live with the memory of a lost son is a cruel punishment for a mother. Once I heard a mother praying with tears: "O God why did you keep me alive to hear this (her son's sudden death)." For her the news was nothing short of her own death.

## **Redemptive finale**

God in his infinite power could have spared Jesus and Mary of the suffering by a miracle. But God did not do that. The salvation process had to be an infinitely perfect sacrifice for which God chose his own son and his mother. Jesus gave suffering a new and divine dimension. It was a suffering for truth, a suffering for life and a suffering for a way to salvation. As our salvific gain was eternal the pain was to be commensurate.



Mary, as the mother of our saviour, was destined to be an essential part of the redemption process, to become the co-redeemer. For this purpose God led Mary through the fire of pain and suffering, through disappointments, overwhelming sorrow and intense pain. Her heart had to be pierced by a sword as prophesied by Simeon at the temple (Luke 2:35). Through this mother's pain, we gained the status of children of God. Behind every gain and glory there is the pain and prayer of a mother.

**Mathew Nampudakam – Belfast – NORTHERN IRELAND**  
09.02.16  
nampudakam@gmail.com

## my first encounter with the Pallottines in India

It all happened so unexpectedly and so beautifully. I made that memorable trip to India along with my younger sister in January 2016. We left on 31<sup>st</sup> Dec 2015, landing in Kochi in early morning of New Year's day. For the first time in my life I celebrated the new year sitting in an aeroplane, watching the stars!

There is so much that can be written about this first trip of mine outside Italy. But let me make it short. I wish to mention just five things that struck me most.

Firstly, the sense of hospitality of the Indian people. It is amazing! In every house, you are received most warmly with flowers, songs and affection. Somebody told me that in the Indian culture, the entry of a guest in your house is to be seen as an entry of God himself!



Secondly, the colour, the youthfulness, the vitality, the crowd! The ladies dressed up in colourful saris, the children in the school with full of smiles, the growing economy and the crowds of people all over. There is no shortage of people in this vast country.

Thirdly, I realised that we can be happy even with little material wealth and money. I found also a lot of people living in rather poor living conditions. There are labourers working in hard conditions and their children resting under the trees; women carrying water on their heads and even children grazing cattle and making their own contribution to running the family. Yet there is a certain joy and serenity on their faces. I realised that it is not what we have but what we are that makes the difference. Coming from the Western world, it made me think that it would be wonderful if our young people were exposed to such situations in order to realise that there is another and a more simple way of living!

Fourthly, I found a multi-religious reality in India. There are Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, and Jews spread all over the country. Yet it was not possible for me to make out if the



children in the many schools in India were Hindus or Muslims or Christians! So also the teachers. They all looked beautiful and smart. They all had the beauty of being the children of God, created in God's own image and likeness. In a world torn apart by religious intolerance and violence, is India not an example of peaceful co-existence and fraternity? I know that there have been also incidences of religious conflicts in India but those few incidences are nothing compared to the religious harmony and peaceful co-existence that I encountered over there. The *St Vincent Pallotti College of Engineering and Technology* in Nagpur run by the Epiphany Province, with about 2000 young



students and 255 professors, for example, is a living testimony of such a peaceful co-existence and cooperation among the Indian people of all religions and cultures.

Fifthly and finally, I was amazed by the Pallottine spirit that exists in this country. The image of St Vincent Pallotti is seen in every house, parish, formation house and school. There is hardly any house without a picture of Mary, Queen of Apostles and St Vincent. Every school with thousands of children is named after St Vincent Pallotti; there are buses belonging to the Pallottine schools and colleges running in many cities written all over them "St Vincent Pallotti"! There seems to be a growing spirit of Cenacle in India. Most memorable was our experience in the new Congregation of the "Cenacle Sisters of the Sacred Heart". There is a new chapel there with the beautiful mosaic of the Cenacle. On 15<sup>th</sup> Jan. a beautiful, new grotto of the Cenacle was blessed and inaugurated at the *Shanti Niwas Retreat Centre* in Bilaspur – all of them the artistic works of the Pallottine, Fr Royichen Joseph sac. The hundreds of young people in formation in the seminaries and convents know so much about Pallotti and his charism. Then the many lay members of the Union in Kerala, Nagpur and Bilaspur. We participated at the ceremony of the apostolic commitment of 21 lay members in Bilaspur in a most colourful liturgical ceremony! St Vincent Pallotti is so honoured and alive in India. How I wish if he were so known and loved in Italy itself!

This short visit opened up my world so much. I have begun to appreciate more the beauty of another culture and people. Above all, my love for St Vincent Pallotti and his sons and daughters is deepened. Perhaps God will give me another chance one day to see other continents as well to see the beauty of creation of the Almighty.

**Lucia Carboni – Rome – ITALY**  
06.02.16  
lulu.carboni@gmail.com

**you commented...**

**on #211** The growth of the Church in Africa has been extraordinary in recent decades (comparable only, perhaps, with that in parts of Asia, such as China and South Korea). Thanks for this insight into one part of this story.

**MB 14.03.16**

thanks for No. 211 - since I was present on May 31, 1990, in London, when Bishop Mahon commissioned the three Pallottine-Sisters for Tanzania, I sent an e-mail to Sr. Mary and she replied right away.

**WW 18.03.16**