



E-BULLETIN #55

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

item 104

cancer patients' STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Cancer is ever on the increase. Anybody working in a hospital can testify to this fact. Infants to the very elderly are affected by this deadly illness, without distinction. There are all types of cancers. If diagnosed early enough the chances of survival, at least for a number of years, are higher. But mostly it does not happen in this way. The tragedy is that often patients do not suffer from any symptom until they are suddenly diagnosed with acute cancer. Even those who do regular health check-ups can end up with unsuspected cancer. This deadly illness shows no mercy to anyone. It hardly matters if one is rich or poor, young or old.

Daily encounter with cancer patients makes us aware of one thing: from the very moment of discovery of this illness until death, most relive the Stations of the Cross in their lives. There is a close parallel between what they endure and the Stations of the Cross that Jesus made 2000 years ago. These are some reflections on this theme.

The First Station

Jesus is Condemned to Die

This is the moment of the discovery of the illness. If the full gravity of the illness is revealed, the patient goes through a moment of shock and disbelief. Even if one may not immediately face death since good and timely treatment can save many lives for years, the very news about this illness, in many ways, is the initiation of a process of death.

The Second Station

Jesus Carries His Cross

The illness, the cross, is placed on the shoulders of the patient and the journey begins!

The Third Station

Jesus Falls the First Time

The first fall can be compared to the psychological shock and pain. Nobody, however strong, can escape the profound sadness in the face of such devastating news!



The Fourth Station

Jesus Meets His Mother

This is the first encounter with dear ones, often one's own mother or father. Facing dear ones in such a moment can become very hard. Often they do not know how to react – with desperation or with assurance and hope. Inevitably, they too become participants in these Stations of the Cross.

The Fifth Station

Simon Helps Jesus Carry His Cross

From the many people encountered on the journey, there emerges a Simon to help to carry the cross. He could be a person of faith who helps the patient to accept God's will; he could also be someone who becomes a friend in need by offering psychological or material support. He or she could be also a family member, such as one's parents or spouse or son or daughter.

The Sixth Station

Veronica Wipes Jesus' Face

This is the really empathising person, who is capable of laughing or crying with the patient. Often we come across numerous such persons. This is precisely the mission of a nurse, of a religious, of a good pastor, or even of a good friend. Genuine love and concern and standing by the patient in this most trying moment of his or her life is the mission of every Veronica.

The Seventh Station

Jesus Falls the Second Time

This could be the moment of medical treatment. The continuous chemotherapy or radiation saps away the physical, psychological and even spiritual energy of the patient. The initial positivity and hope can be displaced by moments of depression and hopelessness.

The Eighth Station

Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem

Upon hearing the news of the illness, friends and foes alike come to visit the patient. Some cry, others try to raise the morale of the patient. Most give an assurance of their prayers. These continuous visits can be comforting and supporting but can also be a continuous pain!

The Ninth Station

Jesus Falls the Third Time

This may be another critical moment, like a rapid decline of health caused by a medical intervention, or an infection. Physical energy and inner strength are ever on the decrease and hence the carrying of the cross becomes more and more tiresome for the patient.

The Tenth Station

Jesus is Stripped

The patient is continuously stripped of his health, his physical stature, status and earnings. The healthy and happy individual is now reduced to a frail figure, at the mercy of others. It is an encounter with one's finite, fragile existence.

The Eleventh Station

Jesus is Nailed to the Cross

The patient is now fully bed-ridden, needing the support of others for everything. Mobility is greatly reduced. Life is lived with minimum nourishment. It is an experience of utter poverty!



The Twelfth Station

Jesus Dies on the Cross

When God so wills, the moment of death arrives. That final act of saying good-bye to our earthly existence – an inevitable part of our creaturely nature!

The Thirteenth Station

Jesus is Taken Down from the Cross

All the tubes and artificial life-saving machines are removed. There is no need for them anymore. What was once a successful and happy human being has now become motionless. A certain serenity sets down on his or her face. The sufferings and pains are no more. He or she is united with his/her Creator – the final destination!

The Fourteenth Station

Jesus is Laid in the Tomb

To dust you shall return! The three days of waiting for the day of resurrection! He/She shall rise again to newness of life in the Risen Lord.



Though reading an article of this nature can give rise to disturbing feelings in ourselves, these Stations of the Cross can become part of anyone's life at any time. Faced with such existential uncertainty, we cannot live in continuous fear and dread, but still we need to be ready to face such a situation. We are not masters of our own destiny; we are in His hands when we are awake and when we are asleep. Moreover, such an awareness of our human frailty will help us to be humble and empathetic towards those who are already making that painful path of the Stations of the Cross.

In this **Year of Faith**, the ultimate test of our faith will be if we are able to live through these daily Stations of the Cross in the way Jesus himself did: suffering and death leading to Resurrection, to the fullness of life in the Risen Lord.

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item 105

giving DEEKSHA

Greetings – hope your Lent began on a good note.

Here at Amaravati we are fully occupied during Lent. We have around 300 people who are setting themselves apart during Lent for special fasting, penance and prayer. This particular practise is called "DEEKSHA".

This year we have initiated them into "*Together with Pallotti at Lent*". It is going to be a rich experience and the people are very responsive.

We also started a Novena and Mass on every 22nd at Pallotti's shrine.

Please pray for us.

I include some pictures of deeksha people.

Praying for you.



giving DEEKSHA



giving ROSARIES

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