

Dear Brothers & Sisters, April 4, 2021

The Lord Jesus is Risen! Alleluia! Each year, the glory of the resurrection fills our hearts with joy & our lives with new splendor as we celebrate Easter Sunday. As members of the Church, we have been concretely preparing ourselves for Easter Sunday since the beginning of the Season of Lent. As part of my personal preparation this year, I participated in our Lenten Bible study entitled, “No Greater Love”.



Overall, the course was quite enriching as we prayerfully read & studied the various Gospel stories describing the suffering and death of Our Lord & Savior, Jesus Christ. One particular reflection on the role of Simon of Cyrene, which the author, Dr. Edward Sri labeled as “The Crosses We Do Not Expect”, I found quite insightful and memorable. To quote him directly, “The Story of Simon of Cyrene reminds us that it is the crosses we least expect that often bear the most fruit in our lives.” This reflection is based on the idea that Simon of Cyrene had gone to Jerusalem to partake in the customary Passover festivities and while there he became the *unexpected* bystander to help Jesus carry His cross. (See Luke 23:26; Matthew 27:32; Mark 15:21) It is believed that after this event, Simon and his family, including his 2 sons Alexander & Rufus, became followers of Jesus and even prominent members of the early church. Hence, this *unexpected cross* in the life of Simon of Cyrene bore abundant fruit. In essence, it was the cross that the Lord chose for Simon to carry, not the one he had chosen for himself. The same holds true for us! The crosses that the Lord sends our way, that He wants us to carry with Him & in Him, whatever they may be, are the ones that will bear the most fruit in our lives of faith. As Christians, it is our conviction that *the Cross leads to the Resurrection*; that without the *tremendous sorrow of Good Friday* we simply do not have the *indescribable joy of Easter Sunday!* This Easter, I pray that we will continue to follow the Lord Jesus as His faithful disciples... that we will continue ‘to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Him’, while always knowing *the joy & the hope* that we have been given in our Risen Lord!

Easter Blessings,

Handwritten signature of Rev. John Large in black ink.

Father John Large