

## **The Cross always foreshadows the Resurrection**

With a freshly acquired Master's degree and after cracking a tough selection process for a job in a top MNC, Samaira was excited to begin this new chapter in her life. She was active in the parish, and as an animator in her SCC, she had a cordial relationship with many families. A young woman of focus and prayer, Samaira dedicated this new beginning to God.

Things went downhill when, about a month into her new job, she started experiencing severe pain in her stomach. She was diagnosed with a malignant tumour. She felt shattered; she just couldn't make sense of this and began questioning everything she held dear in life. Her relationship with God was also strained. The doctors advised her immediate surgery for the removal of the tumour, and four rounds of aggressive chemotherapy. Many decisions had to be made in a short time. Samaira was worried about her family, the money required for the treatment, her new job, the journey towards healing, and so on. But supported by her parents, she agreed to go ahead with the treatment.

The priest from the parish came to anoint her before the surgery; however, Samaira hardly spoke and didn't even want to say a prayer. Her question to God was, "Why me? Why now? What wrong did I ever do to you that you punished me like this? How do I handle all this with so many other responsibilities?" The surgery was a success. But it didn't seem to have any effect on Samaira, especially on her spirituality. She seemed dejected and defeated.

After she was discharged from hospital, the priest and the SCC animator came home to visit her. The priest noticed that something was wrong, and asked if he could speak with her in private. He gave her a listening ear, and Samaira got a chance to articulate her feelings, and she poured her heart out. The priest patiently listened to her express how she felt abandoned by God, her fears about living with this disease, her job, her future, her family and so on. She felt that it was unjust that God would let something like this happen to her, His daughter. The priest smiled, then taking her hand, explained that God hadn't abandoned her. He explained to her all that had happened behind the scenes – how the parish prayer groups interceded for her safe and speedy recovery, how the SCC members rallied behind her and collected funds for her treatment, how several people came and visited her family, and kept checking about her well-being while she was being operated, and so on.

Samaira was overwhelmed to realise how much she was cared for and loved. The priest continued, "God never once abandoned you. He showed you just how much you are loved by sending your SCC members and your colleagues to help you out. Sometimes, Jesus shares His suffering with us, because He trusts us and loves us. But He sees that someone will love and care for you. The Cross always foreshadows the Resurrection. I know this isn't the best time for you, and there is a lot to process. But you're not alone in this journey. The Church, your community members, and all your loved ones are there with you. And you will successfully complete your treatment, and experience the joy and the bliss of the Resurrection."

Samaira broke into tears; it slowly dawned on her how wonderfully the Lord had been working in her life. She had thought she was punished; that God was cruel to her. But now, with the Cross paving the way for the light of the Resurrection, Samaira made peace with her condition, and went ahead with the rest of her treatment, feeling loved and reassured.

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ Jesus, whenever we experience suffering and isolation, it is not that we are being abandoned by God, but rather He trusts us enough to make us sharers in

His passion. And this is one thing we need to keep in mind this Easter; the Cross always foreshadows the Resurrection. Sufferings will always give way to the Light of Christ. All of us Christians, and as SCC members, are asked to journey along with Jesus like His mother, who never once left His side.

This Easter season, may we be the light of the risen Lord to others as the priest, the SCC members, her parents and others were to Samaira in her moments of despair. May we, who believe in the risen Lord, never ask for our crosses to be removed, but rather ask for the grace to pick them up willingly. And may we always bring the hope and reassurance to others that the risen Lord brings with Him.

**Questions for reflection:**

1. What insights have you gained from Samaira's story?
2. Have you felt the hand of God working strongly with you while going through difficult times?
3. List some concrete ways where we, as an SCC/cluster, can truly bring hope and the reassurance of the risen Lord to all, especially those who are suffering.