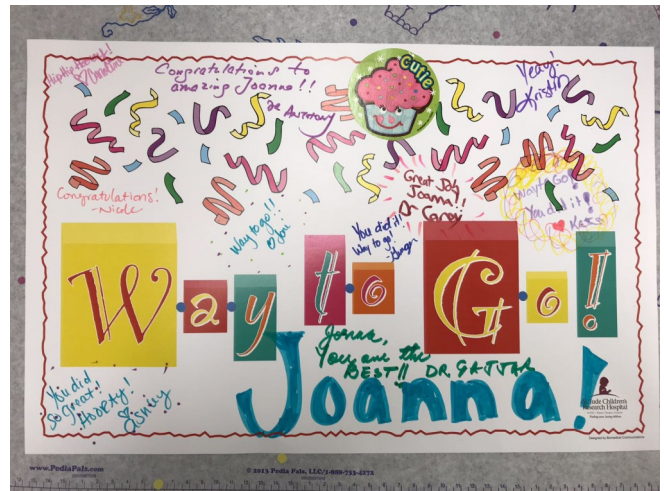


The God Who Suffers for Us : My Easter 2018

Rev. Peter Liu

This 2018 Easter is a very different one for my family because my daughter was given another chance at life. It is through the resurrection of Christ that we are given a renewal of our lives and spiritual life. After going through seven months of treatment, my daughter Joanna, is finally being discharged from the hospital. This milestone, coinciding with Easter, brings a special joy and blessing to our family. The last two three years, we have asked Joanna, who has been a believer for quite a while, when she would decide to be baptized. As her parents, her baptism has been one of our biggest concern and we want that to be her decision. We had hoped that she would go through the waters of baptism next Easter but she felt a little shy and declined. But last July, she was diagnosed with cancer. Since that time, she has become more sensitive to spiritual matters. She prayed on her own initiative and she knew that Christians in the US and in China, and everyone from all over the world who knows her have been praying for her. So, January of this year (2018) I asked her, "When are you going to be baptized?" She responded: "When my course of treatment is completed. If it happens before Easter, I want to be baptized during Easter!" Praise the Lord! God has granted her the desires of her heart. She had completed her course of therapy and she will be going home tomorrow (Saturday) and she will be baptized on Resurrection Sunday! What a blessing from the Lord and what a joy for my family to finally see her through her therapy and now her baptism – all happening at the same time! What a double portion of His grace!



Last Tuesday, when we went to bring Joanna for her scheduled follow up appointment and to complete some of her blood test. This was because when she was last discharged from the hospital, she was released a week early and therefore, did not get to complete her blood work. As we were in the waiting room, we were pleasantly surprised by a group of doctors and nurses who gathered around us with balloons and presented Joanna with a "graduation certificate" and sang a "graduation song" to her. She had graduated from chemotherapy! We were so taken aback. We were at a loss for words and we could only say, "Thank-you!" profusely and took a few pictures with them to commemorate this unforgettable occasion. The results of the tests indicate that Joanna is recovering really well. It has been a long journey for her. She has gone through seven months of chemotherapy from August of last year till now. She is now reunited with us, with her entire family. Not one is missing. Our family has become whole again!

As a family, we had gone through seven months of turmoil and hardships. Joanna had gone through seven months of trial by fire herself! There were no words that could truly describe what we as a family felt. Those were reserved only for those who had been through the thick of it!

On this Resurrection Sunday, when we remember the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, God reminded me of something I had never thought of before. God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is akin to a perfect family who went through trials and suffering for a humanity that knew nothing about nor could ever comprehend such trials and suffering. God the Father suffered the separation from God, the Son who suffered on earth for 33 years. God the Spirit and God the Son, went through them together. All these was not for the benefit of God Himself but for sinful and rebellious humanity. Oh! What love the Father has for us! Oh! What sacrifice!

People! Don't you know! The pain and suffering we experience in life is the consequence of our sins. The pain and suffering God endured was not because of his shortcomings, He suffered for our sakes! Oh! What price He paid! The world will never know the pain nor will they ever comprehend what God went through for us! It is only when we ourselves suffer pain and loss that we are able to catch a glimpse of what God went through. This is the reason why God allows us to go through suffering and to let us realize that there is a price to paid in real love. To truly love is to be redemptive. We might think that we know how to love but we don't!



"I am baptized!" Joanna was baptized on Resurrection Sunday, April 1 2018, by her father, Rev. Peter Liu.

At the very heart, our love is merely the giving up a little bit of our selfishness. If you have not suffered pain in love, you have not really loved!

Tomorrow is Resurrection Sunday. Tomorrow morning, Joanna will go through the waters of baptism. My family and I want to thank God together for His care, to thank the church family who prayed for us and loved us, and to thank brothers and sisters for their encouragement and their care for us. Joanna is the youngest in the family and also the last one to be baptized. I thank God that He has given me the privilege to baptize all three of my daughters. This is the greatest reward that God has given me as the father and pastor of my children. This is the moment every father looks forward to for his children. "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord!" (Joshua 24:15)

Pastor Peter Liu
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