

The Almighty has done great things for us; HOLY is His Name! (Luke1:49)

In August of 2004, my Mum was diagnosed with stomach cancer. Coming in the face of a host of other major ailments that she was already having, this news was quite devastating for us. The most fearful aspect of cancer is the ensuing debilitating pain. Such a cross would be extremely heavy for a young and sturdy body, and we can only imagine how terrible it would be for one that was no longer young or sturdy. Nevertheless, I was quick to say to myself that the Lord will take her away before any pain overcome her, and I guessed that was the prayer of everyone who loves her. We praise and thank God that our prayers were answered. Though she was weak, and suffered occasional minor discomforts, she never experienced any major pain, and had no need of painkillers at any time. ***“For nothing is impossible with God.”*** (Luke1:37, Matthew 19:26). **Praise the Lord!**

“Before they call, I will answer.” (Isaiah 65:24)

About three to four months before she died, she sustained a very deep scratch on her foot close to her toes. Aggravated by her diabetes, it turned into a very deep septic wound. My sister tried to harness the best of both western and Chinese medicine in the treatment of the wound. After taking her to consult a western medicine doctor who prescribed a course of antibiotics, my sister also brought her to be treated by a Chinese medicine physician. The prognosis of the western medicine doctor was that an amputation of her leg was a logical conclusion as the wound was very close to the extremity of her body. However, the Lord decreed otherwise! The kind Lord rewarded my sister’s untiring perseverance. Unexpectedly, much to the delight and amazement of everyone, the wound healed beautifully. If the amputation had gone ahead, I cannot imagine how such a drastic medical procedure can do to my Mum’s frail body and spirit! **Praise the Lord!**

In the one and a half months before she died, she was admitted to hospital. As she had a phobia of staying in hospitals, my sisters and I took turns to stay vigil at her bedside 24-hours a day. In the previous hospital stays whenever she was alone, she would generally make a nuisance of herself by throwing out the pillows and blankets from her bed. Such were her fear and agitation at having to stay at the hospital. However, during her last stay whenever she opened her eyes on awakening, there was always a smiling, reassuring familiar face present at the bedside. Her room mates were getting envious of the round-the-clock 24-hour attention my Mum was getting from her children! My Mum stayed in hospital for over 2 weeks.

After her stay in hospital, we brought her home as we knew the end was near and we wanted her to be as comfortable as possible. Unlike other stomach cancer patients, my Mum was able to eat naturally by mouth till her last day, although swallowing was slow due to her previous strokes. Thus, the discomfort of a feeding tube was done away with. During the stage when her stomach rejected food, my Mum was able to survive on a few small sips of water and milk for up to 7 days without experiencing dehydration or fever. After this period of near starvation, she returned to her normal intake of food and water without the need for a feeding tube. **Praise the Lord!**

“Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.” (Psalm 116:15).

It was very apparent to us the Lord went to great lengths to prepare her soul spiritually for meeting Himself. On the Sunday before she died, my brother-in-law, Sean who is a Eucharist Minister brought the Holy Communion for my Mum. However, it was apparent that she was too drowsy to receive the Lord in Holy Communion. All our efforts to arouse her from her sleep were in vain. Since she could not be awakened it was decided that we prayed the rosary for her in her room in the presence of the Lord in the Holy Eucharist. It was only after the completion of the rosary recited by five of us in her room, that she awoke by herself naturally, and indicated to us she was ready for Holy Communion. **Praise the Lord!**

Ever since that incident, and taking a cue from it, I would remind myself of the great need to prepare ourselves spiritually before we receive Holy Communion. I would try to go to church earlier to pray the rosary and offer it for the preparation of my heart and other souls to receive Jesus worthily.

“Father, I will that they also, whom You have given Me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory” (John 17:24).

The Lord in His great kindness was preparing my Mum for a holy death. Many people were praying and offering sacrifices for her. The masses I attended daily and the hours of Eucharistic adoration were offered for the purification of her soul in preparation to meet the Lord. On nights my sleeping arrangement was a mattress beside her bed in preparation for her final departure. A good friend of mine had earlier described how harrowing her experience was in witnessing her grandfather’s last moments. After the sharing of her distressing experience with me, I was left wondering uneasily whether my Mum’s impending death would be as frightening? **Praise to the Lord**, it cannot be more contrary! My Mum’s death changed forever my perception of what death can be like.

Darkness and gloom though death may leave in its wake but to the one meeting her Lord, it is brightness in the sight of the Lord. ***“At evening time it shall be light.” (Zech. 14:7).***

She died on the eve of the Ascension of our Lord. None of us has dared to hope for such an auspicious day for her! On that day 4th May 2005, I recited the rosary aloud in her room while she was sleeping. After the completion of the rosary, I made a petition to the Sacred Heart of Jesus for Him to take her to heaven. Little did I know my prayer was answered on the spot! After I finished making my petition, I turned to look at her. She had already slowed down her breathing. Then she stopped breathing. Lips closed, all the facial features relaxed and a very beautiful expression came over her face. It was the expression of sweet surrender. The Lord had come and taken her soul! It was 2.45 pm. close to the time of the holy death of our Lord. At that moment, death has lost its teeth. Instead of the sense of sadness and tragedy, I felt greatly uplifted! I also had the sense of great relief that my Mum had faithfully run the race, crossed the finishing line triumphantly, and was qualified for her everlasting crown. A tangible peace and tranquility descended upon the room. Never in my wildest dreams have I ever imagine that joy can be triumphant even in death! I am looking forward to my own day!

“For nothing is impossible with God.” (Luke 1:37, Matthew 19:26).

Even after many years after the incident, I still felt the awe and gratitude of the great kindness of the Lord in answering my prayers immediately on the spot. What more could I ask? **Praise the Lord!**

My family members and I have many good and caring friends including priests and seminarians in Singapore, India and Hong Kong who generously offered masses, prayers and sacrifices for my Mum. In His great mercy, the Lord has made use of all these loving gifts to alleviate the suffering of my Mum, to purify her soul, and made it ready for heaven. I am sure my Mum is now in the company of our Lord, and she knows the names of all those who had interceded for her, and undoubtedly will be praying specially for all of them.

“Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.” (Psalm 116:15)

I bless and thank our Lord Jesus Christ for his great kindness and mercy shown to my Mum.

May the Lord be praised always!

Testimony by Agnes