



Carrying the Cross with Christ

A reflection on compassion, healing and hope in the mission of CRSHCIU

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“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.” Luke 9:23

Life carries many crosses. Some are visible. Others remain hidden in the hearts of those who suffer quietly. In every burden, Christ invites us not to walk alone, but to carry the cross with Him.

A Gospel Message for a Wounded World

Sickness, poverty, loss, disability, rejection, loneliness, birth injuries, cancer and the daily struggle to provide for a family are crosses carried by many people in silence. As Christians, we often pray for God to remove these burdens. Yet the Gospel leads us to a deeper truth: Jesus did not promise a life free from suffering. He promised His presence in the middle of it.

Jesus carried the cross to Calvary. He accepted suffering out of love for humanity. He stumbled under its weight, experienced abandonment, endured humiliation and felt intense pain. Still, He never lost sight of His mission. His resurrection reminds us that suffering is not the final chapter. When united with Christ, the cross becomes a path toward hope, healing and new life.

The Crosses Our Communities Carry

This message speaks directly to the mission of the Catholic Religious Sisters Health Care Initiative Uganda. Every day, Catholic Religious Sisters meet women, children, families and health workers carrying burdens that are both physical and emotional.

Mothers living with obstetric fistula carry pain, shame and isolation. Women diagnosed with cervical or breast cancer carry fear and uncertainty. Children with disabilities face stigma and exclusion. Families affected by poverty struggle to meet basic needs. Health workers and caregivers carry the emotional weight of serving many people with limited resources.

These are not distant challenges. They are the daily realities of the communities CRSHCIU serves.

Accompaniment as a Ministry of Healing

The mission of CRSHCIU is not only to reduce suffering. Some suffering cannot disappear in a single day. The deeper mission is to accompany people with compassion, restore their dignity and remind them that they are not alone.

Just as Simon of Cyrene helped Jesus carry His cross, Catholic Religious Sisters become companions to vulnerable people on difficult journeys. Through maternal and child health services, psychosocial support, health education, cancer screening, fistula treatment referrals, counselling and community outreach, the Sisters help lighten the burdens carried by women and families.

When a woman living with obstetric fistula is welcomed without judgment, she experiences the compassion of Christ. When she receives surgery, counselling and support to rebuild her confidence, she begins to understand that her condition does not define her. She remains a beloved daughter of God, worthy of respect, love and opportunity.

Healthcare That Restores the Whole Person

Healthcare is not only about curing disease. It is about healing the whole person: body, mind and spirit. Many people served by CRSHCIU have carried invisible wounds for years. Some have lived with pain that others did not understand. Others have lost hope after repeated disappointments.

Through professional healthcare, compassionate listening, counselling, prayer and community support, the Sisters help people rediscover hope. A mother encouraged to attend antenatal care receives more than health advice. A woman guided to seek early cancer screening receives more than a referral. A family supported through a difficult season receives more than a service. They receive a reminder that God works through people who care.

The Cross Also Transforms Those Who Serve

Carrying the cross with Christ also transforms those who serve. Religious Sisters often work in difficult environments where needs are high and resources are limited. They witness painful situations and sometimes feel the weight of what remains undone.

Yet their vocation reminds them that every act of kindness matters. Every wound dressed, every woman counselled, every child vaccinated, every family supported and every patient treated becomes a living expression of Christ's love. Their sacrifices become part of the healing mission of the Church.

A Call to Carry One Another's Burdens

The work of CRSHCIU also calls communities to become bearers of one another's burdens. Families are encouraged to support women recovering from birth injuries instead of rejecting them. Communities are challenged to end stigma around fistula, cancer, disability and mental health. Leaders are invited to support policies that improve access to quality maternal healthcare. Partners and donors become instruments of God's providence by helping make healing possible.

When we carry another person's cross with love, we reflect the compassion of Christ.

Hope Beyond the Cross

The cross is not meant to crush hope. It teaches perseverance, strengthens faith, deepens compassion and reminds us that God's grace is sufficient even in weakness. The resurrection assures us that every cross carried with Christ leads toward new life.

As CRSHCIU continues serving vulnerable mothers, children, youth and families, it proclaims a powerful Gospel message: no one should carry life's burdens alone. Jesus walks with those who suffer. Through the dedicated service of Catholic Religious Sisters, He continues to touch wounds, restore dignity, heal broken lives and bring hope where despair once seemed to prevail.

May we embrace our own crosses with courage, help others carry theirs with compassion, and trust that with Christ every burden becomes lighter and every journey moves toward the joy of the Resurrection.