

Do you remember the tragic fire at Notre Dame Cathedral last year in Paris? How it shocked the whole world! Seeing such a magnificent building engulfed in flames immensely saddened all who saw the devastation unfold. It was a monumental blow to the nation and people of France and it will take years to rebuild this famous place of worship.



There was one striking image which struck me though. After the fire, we began to see the inside of Notre Dame Cathedral. It showed the interior of the cathedral, scorched and ruined, its art treasures lost, its contents still smouldering. But high up in the background, unbowed by the flames, stands a golden cross, brightly shining in the

darkness of the surrounding debris.

Since the fire took place last year at Easter, it is hard not to see this picture as a parable. 'Notice what is left inside, untouched, after the destruction of all sorts of 'priceless' works of art at Notre Dame Cathedral? The Cross. What an image for us to give us hope in our Christian lives and what a picture of God's love to secular Western Europe.'

In our epistle reading for today are some of the most beautiful words of scripture ever written in Romans chapter 8. Nothing can come between us and the love of Christ. For I am certain of this; neither death nor life, nothing that exists, nothing still to come, not any power or height or depth can ever come between us and the love of God made visible in Christ Jesus.

As I pondered the devastation of Notre Dame Cathedral after everything had been scorched, it spoke to me of the abiding value of the Cross. The words of a hymn came to my mind:

*In the cross of Christ I glory,
Towering o'er the wrecks of time;
All the light of sacred story,
Gathers round its head sublime.*

The place of worship may be destroyed, but not the God we worship. The message of the Cross, at the centre of our faith, remains a timeless, undamaged truth.

The hymn continues:

*When the woes of life o'ertake me,
Hopes deceive, and fears annoy,
Never shall the cross forsake me,
Lo! It glows with peace and joy.*

The Cross in this church and on the very top of the steeple of this church speaks to this community of God's abiding love which as our reading from Romans reminds us, can never be destroyed. Things may come and go and things will die away, but Jesus Christ's love will not.

So let us take heart my dear brothers and sisters. Because even among the ruins of our world, even among the hurts and partings in our own lives, even among that procession of griefs we all experience in life, the Cross still stands tall, reminding us of the love of God, the presence of God and the tight clasp of his hand on our lives.

Love, joy and peace to you all.

Fr. Tim