

Lift Up the Cross

Scripture Reading — John 12:20-35

And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself. — John 12:32

A few years ago, local authorities in a big coastal Chinese town asked churches to take down the crosses from the tops of their church buildings. This led to confrontations between the local government and Christians, and eventually one of the most beautiful churches was destroyed by bulldozers. Hundreds of crosses were also forcibly removed across town.

I visited the area right after the height of the confrontation. The whole scene looked so different. Without their crosses, the churches no longer looked like churches.

Local Christians said that, apart from being sad about what had happened, it was a wake-up call. In the past they had spent a lot of resources building magnificent churches but largely ignoring outreach and community needs.

Now they realize that a building is not the most important part of a church's ministry.

Jesus said we need to lift up the cross so that people will know him. This is not mainly about setting up a cross on a building. It means, first and foremost, living out the message of the cross in our lives.

Jesus says to us, "You are the light of the world. . . . Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:14-16).

Prayer

"This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine, let it shine, let it shine, let it shine." Father, help us to shine the light of your love each and every day. In Christ, Amen.

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