



When the Cock Crows for the Second Time



Cindy Yuen Chan

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Contents

IMPRIMATUR:

Most Rev. Michael Yeung
Bishop of Hong Kong
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Acknowledgements

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Many blessings.

Foreword I

「愛」是天主教會的中心信息。耶穌要求我們要彼此相愛，在這之前，我們先要經驗到上主無條件地愛著我們。這種無條件的愛是我們在受難週就可以經驗到的。

當我們在耶穌的受難中思考這份愛，我們就會深深覺得自己被耶穌的愛所環抱。即使我們跟伯多祿一樣否認耶穌，耶穌的愛還是承載著我們。耶穌的愛勝過所有怨恨、嫉妒、膽怯和復仇感。耶穌的受難讓我們看見，沒有任何事物可以讓我們與耶穌的愛隔離。

若我們在自己的弱點、錯誤、恐懼和沮喪中，還能確知自己被耶穌愛著，我們也會有能力去愛同樣有軟弱和錯誤的弟兄姊妹。

本書作者從被電影「受難曲」觸動開始，不斷作信仰反省，從救恩到寬恕、悟到天父的愛比罪惡更大、修和聖事的動力，使我們深切領悟天父的慈悲；加上作者自己個人的經驗，更加

可以幫助讀者明白寬恕之道的真義；並在從主的寬恕吸取力量。
從而可以在生活中做天主和平的工具，做生活中的修和使者。

因此，這是一本生命的書，亦是一本「活好當下」的書，
我很願意推薦這本好書給大家欣賞，細味和共享。

陳志明副主教
Rev. Dominic Chan, VG

Foreword II

After reading *When the Cock Crows for the Second Time* I was much touched at the growth of Cindy whom I have known for more than 30 years. The depth she is willing to look into herself in the light of the Bible and the reflection she had is amazing. More than that, she is not afraid to unfold her hurt and pain to share with the readers. I am sure the transparent sharing would bear fruit and a help for those who find it hard to embrace their hurt or to let go of their anger. In Jesus and with Jesus, there is nothing impossible. I would like to quote the last sentence from the book “instead of continuing to water the plant of hatred, we may choose to plant seeds of love and forgiveness in this world”.

Sr Agnes Ho, FMM

Foreword III

Forgiveness is a very important teaching in Christianity. It is also seen as a great virtue in human life. It is the solution to resolve difficulties in our life, ranging from interpersonal difficulty, marital and family conflict, to the conflict between nations. The most impressive bible story and lesson about forgiveness is 'If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them.' (Luke 6:29). The meaning of this is obvious, but it is not easy to live it out. Another famous bible teaching about forgiveness is The Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32). The father who represents our Heavenly Father reflects divine love and forgiveness as well as boundless mercy. After all, forgiveness is something easier said than done.

This book is a good way to link up bible teaching and real life practice. Through her daily life experience, Cindy has undergone a lot of reflection on Forgiveness. She shared her understanding and interpretation about Forgiveness through her real life experience. From her stories, we can see that it is not an easy task for her, but she has undergone a lot of struggle and difficulties on the way of practicing forgiving. This book is a testament of her faith.

This book is suitable for not only people with Christian faith, but also people with other religious beliefs or even without any belief. We can learn that forgiveness is more than excusing or forgetting. It is an active action taken with underlying love and mercy. It is not just a release of mutual conflict but it is also a personal release from negativity. Without Forgiveness, negative emotions usually build up and accumulate till the point of explosion. These negative emotions include upset, anger, hatred, helplessness and so on. Forgiveness is an effective relief and cure for the underlying maladaptive emotions. Divine forgiveness and mercy is God's gift to us. It is always our right to choose the right door. Forgiveness is definitely the right key.

Dr Chung-hin Willy Wong
Specialist in Psychiatry, Columnist

Chapter 1

Introduction

It was when the cock crew for the second time that Peter realised he had denied Jesus three times as Jesus already foretold during the Last Supper.¹ When Jesus turned and looked at Peter, His eyes of infinite mercy had drawn tears of repentance from Peter.^{2,3} At that very moment Peter regretted his denials.

I watched the movie *The Passion of the Christ*⁴ many years ago. In the movie, by the time the shot came to Jesus' expression when He heard the cock crow for the second time, my eyes were wet remembering my own experience of being betrayed. I could feel Jesus' pain and disappointment from His humanity. Totally absorbed in the role as a victim, I thought Peter deserved to be heartbroken because of his unfaithfulness, not to mention his boastful declaration that he would lay down his life for Jesus during the Last Supper. I

1 Mark 14: 30, 66-72

2 Catechism of the Catholic Church. #1429. <http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p2s2c2a4.htm#III> accessed 21 May 2017

3 Luke 22: 61-62

4 *The Passion of the Christ*, Directed by Mel Gibson [Film] (Los Angeles: Newmarket Films 2004)

could not echo Jesus' compassion and mercy towards Peter nor did I realise Peter was also a victim of his own limitations.

When the Risen Lord first appeared to His disciples, the first sentence He said to them was "Peace be with you."^{5,6} Instead of blaming the disciples for forsaking and denying Him at the moments when He needed their support most, He blessed them as usual. Who am I to condemn Peter while Jesus has forgiven him and me?

On another occasion, Jesus asked Peter three times if Peter loved Him, each time followed by laying Peter with a responsibility of tending or feeding His sheep.⁷ Here Peter was given a chance to reaffirm his love for the Lord and was restored from guilt and disappointment. I view that the whole series of events: Peter's boasting of his courage and faithfulness to die for Jesus, his thrice denying Jesus or his connection with Him, his deep regret, and his experience of being forgiven, altogether shaped him and strengthened him for taking up the critical task of leading Jesus' followers. Through these events, Peter was becoming more humble, stronger in faith and his love for Jesus; and he got prepared to suffer even to sacrifice his life for Jesus.

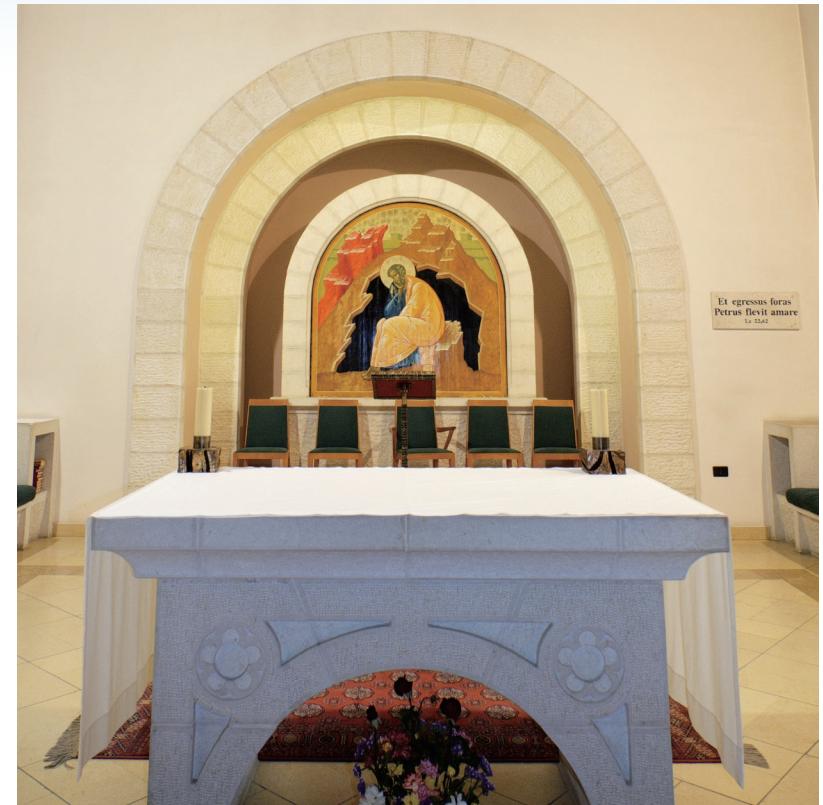
5 Luke 24: 36

6 John 20: 19

7 John 21: 15-17

This was the starting point that I reviewed incidents in my life that had troubled me, in various degrees, some markedly and some subconsciously. My cases might be trivial but these matters of seemingly little importance may trouble us in our interpersonal relationship and keep us away from peace in our daily life.

The views in this book regarding the very broad and complex topic of forgiveness were cultivated from my experience, research and dialogues with many teachers from various disciplines. Here I shall summarise some of the Catholic teachings on Salvation and forgiveness as I understand them, and share my experience of being both an offender and the one being offended. In addition, there will be true stories from victims of assault and murder cases. Somehow my hurts have been healed, by Christ, through His faithful priests and followers. I hope that by sharing my experience we may all travel further down the road to see God's love and forgiveness, live in peace and be merciful to others.



"And he went out and wept bitterly." (Luke 22: 62)

Church of St Peter in Gallicantu, Jerusalem, Israel, May 2017. Courtesy of Mr Joseph Ma.

Chapter 2

Salvation and Forgiveness

Salvation

Before going on, I would like to summarise some of the basics of Salvation and forgiveness from my understanding of the Catholic Church's teaching. I hope it will help remind us to appreciate God's love and choose the way we live. Christ is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, not only for our sins but also for the sins of the whole world.⁸ By the Cross, Jesus won salvation for all men and redeemed us from the sin that held us in bondage.⁹ That means, when Jesus died on the Cross, He won salvation for all mankind, from Adam and Eve to the last human living on earth; and redeemed mankind from sins and the consequences of sins.

Jesus' death on the Cross was the price of atonement for all our sins. This is a gift of life and forgiveness; nonetheless it is our choice to accept His gift or not. The first step of that acceptance is receiving the Sacrament of Baptism. By Baptism all our sins are forgiven: original sins¹⁰ and all personal sins, as well as all punishment for sins.¹¹ Due to our weaknesses and inclinations, we still commit sins after Baptism. So the Risen Christ instituted the Sacrament of Reconciliation (also known as Confession or Penance) by entrusting His power of forgiveness to His disciples through the Holy Spirit.¹² The subsequent acceptance of Jesus' gift is that when we are truly sorry for our sins and confess those sins sincerely we are forgiven. Through the Holy Spirit, our conscience is invoked, urging us to repent and return to the Lord with a contrite heart. For those who do not believe in God, we pray for their conversion as Jesus also died for them and salvation is ready for them. Many unbelievers live a merciful and committed life. When the criminal nailed beside Jesus did accept his deserving sentence and said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus replied, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise."¹³ This criminal, in his last moment of life, admitted

8 1 John 2:2

9 Catechism of the Catholic Church #1741. <http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p3s1c1a3.htm> accessed 30 May 2017

10 Extracted from Wikipedia: By his sin, Adam as the first human being, lost the original holiness and justice he had received from God, not only for himself but for all humans. Adam and Eve transmitted to their descendants human nature wounded by their own first sin. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Original_sin#Roman_Catholicism> accessed 1 Jul 2017

11 Catechism of the Catholic Church #1263. <http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p2s2c1a1.htm#VII> accessed 25 Jun 2017

12 John 20: 21-23

13 Luke 23: 40-43

his wrongs and begged for Jesus' mercy; still Jesus granted him His presence together in Paradise. It is not for us humans to judge who will be saved and why. God's mercy and forgiveness are beyond our understanding.

Hurts and Forgiveness

Even within the same adverse event, the relationship between the victim and the offender gives rise to different degrees of hurts. Whether the offender is a stranger, an acquaintance, a business partner, a friend, a sibling, one's own child or a spouse; the closer the relationship, the more hurtful it may feel. If the victim still has contacts with the offender, it is possible that the hurtful action recurs or the actions of the offender become more severe, and for the victim irreconcilable. The darkness seems never ending. Hurts grow and accumulate. How can one forgive under this situation? It is more easily said than done.

The first response to hurts is anger. We must acknowledge the existence of anger before starting the process of forgiving. As Christians, we might sometimes think that it is sinful to feel angry. It is not. It is sinful only when we cannot control our desire of retaliation arising from anger or if that anger manifests itself into acts of violence or evil.

At times we may be angry at God for letting tragedies and terrible injustices happen. Again we may consider that it is disrespectful to God if we are angry at Him. These thoughts make us feel unfaithful, guilty and perhaps despair. But God fully understands our pains such that He will rather embrace and heal us. He understands. Just trust Him.

Even though intellectually we may want to trust God and we all know the advantages of forgiving and disadvantages of being unforgiving, it is not enough. We must understand how forgiving frees us from the burden of hatred and how an unforgiving manner destroys our peace. Unforgiving is like a hand twisting the knife that has already pierced into one's heart. One has been wounded by the offense beforehand and being unforgiving produces more pain. Even worse is rumination in which a ruminator repeatedly thinks of the offense or hurt, through his own perception, whether a correct understanding or not. Worthington illustrated this precisely when he said, "Rumination is what cows do: regurgitating food from one of their stomachs and masticating it ('chewing their cud')."¹⁴ and "Unforgiveness requires rumination."¹⁵ By continuing to dwell on the offense, the hurt internalises becoming a part of one's resentful life and character. In that case, how can one escape such a vicious cycle?

14 Everett L Worthington Jr, *Forgiving and Reconciling: Bridges to Wholeness and Hope* (first published as *Five Steps to Forgiveness* in 2001, revised edn, InterVarsity Press 2003) 84

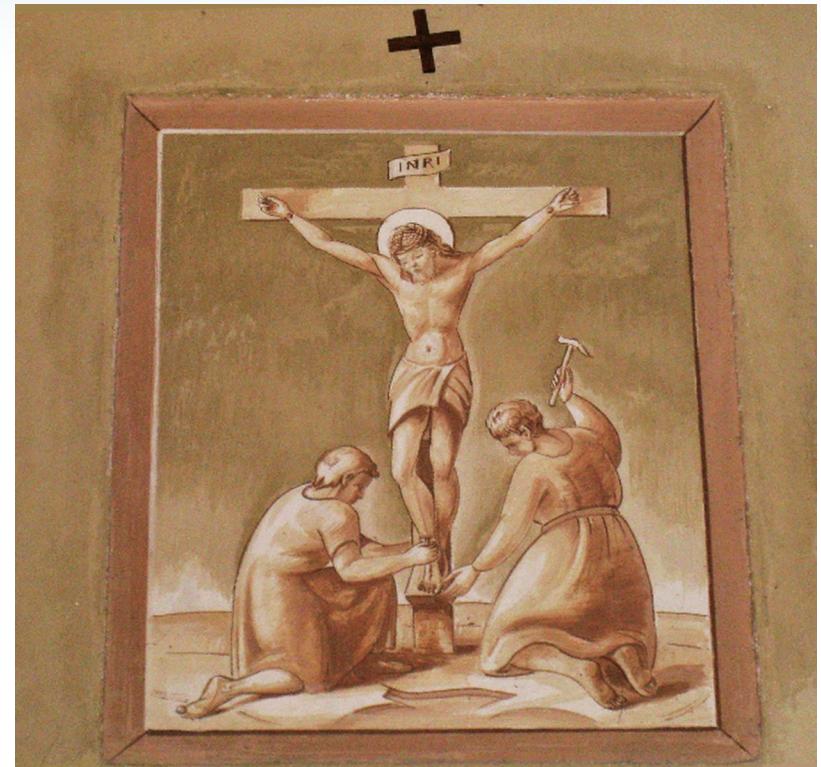
15 Ibid at 149

Of course, we must, for our own sake, break the cycle. My Criminology teacher points out a characteristic of forgiveness, “Forgiveness is a learnt behaviour. We learnt from our parents and schools where we were brought up, from Church and from our experiencing others’ kindness; we then imitate them.” Truly we learn forgiveness from others and our greatest teacher is Jesus Christ. For many the most impressive example is when Jesus was on the Cross praying for his persecutors, “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.”¹⁶

We cannot forgive without God’s Divine grace. For God, all things are possible.¹⁷ With the help of Holy Spirit, we are able to forgive even for the most tragic events that the idea of forgiveness is out of our imagination.

**In him we have redemption through his blood,
the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to
the riches of his grace.**

Ephesians 1:7



“Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.”
(Luke 23:34)

Church of Bethphage, Jerusalem, Israel, July 2010.

¹⁶ Luke 23: 34

¹⁷ Matthew 19: 26

Chapter 3

Sins

My First Lie

This was my first lie in my life so far as I could remember. It happened when I was about five years old. One day when my mum took me to a wet market, I suddenly had a thought of trying out how a pickpocket could steal money from someone, as I had watched from the TV programmes. So to test my mum if she would know someone picked her pocket, I slipped my little hand into a pocket of my mum's pants. Instantly, I was caught by the surrounding pedestrians. They were furious and shouted at me. It seemed that they were going to beat me. My mum protected me by explaining to them that I was not a little thief but her own daughter. She asked me why I did that. Being afraid of the consequences of telling the truth, I lied to my mum that I only wanted to search the handkerchief in her pocket. My mum taught me that I should have notified her for what I wanted, instead of taking things secretly. Finally, I got off without punishment.

The act was just for fun and satisfied my curiosity, I was not aware of its implications that I could have been caught as a real pickpocket. Since I was only a kid and did not have any bad intention, I did not have bad feelings towards myself. But this illustrates that a 5-year-old may tell a lie. By all means, depending on the context and the intent, some lies are more damaging and hurtful.

Envy and the Seven Capital Vices

One day I realised that I was envious of some remarkable deeds achieved by my friend. Of course my jealousy did not surface and I congratulated my friend when I first heard the news. I could not believe what I realised, which was happening at the bottom of my heart. These achievements were showers of comfort for my friend whose life was surrounded by sickness and misfortune. I went to Confession. In the confessional, the priest advised, "You don't have to be jealous. Your grace from God is well sufficient for your use."¹⁸ Yes, when looking back at all the blessings of my life, the grace is so abundant that it is beyond my expectations. Indeed from my poor childhood I would not have imagined all the abundance of grace I would later receive. I always keep this piece of realisation in my heart. It is particularly useful whenever I feel disturbed by others' success. Thank you Father.

¹⁸ From 2 Corinthians 12: 9: "but [the Lord] said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness'"

Envy, together with pride, avarice, wrath, lust, gluttony and sloth are called the Seven Capital Vices.¹⁹ They are human's bad inclinations that if uncontrolled, may give rise to other sins and cause one and others to do evil. I admit that I have committed all these seven vices at some moments in my life; with pride, wrath and envy being the most problematic issues. Nonetheless, I occasionally encounter some problems with receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation: it becomes routine and mechanical for me. I should pray more so that the faults in my mind and my action could be revealed to me; perhaps these faults had been hidden under my pride, indifference or the complexity of a busy life.

Love to Cover Sins

Sometimes we may be annoyed by our committing of the same sins after receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation again and again; begin to doubt whether our sins can actually be forgiven. In a talk about the Sacrament, a priest said that, at the time of our Confession, if we were really regretful of our sins and sought to avoid the situations that led us to temptation, our sins would be absolved. We should confess again for the recurred sin. The test is whether we are able to believe God still loves and forgives us after our failing God for 10 or 20 times. In his apostolic letter proclaiming a "Year for

Priests", Emeritus Pope Benedict XVI cited these soothing words offered by St John Vianney (1786-1859), who spent at least 11 hours a day in the confessional working to reconcile people with God, "The good Lord knows everything. Even before you confess, he already knows that you will sin again, yet he still forgives you. How great is the love of our God: he even forces Himself to forget the future, so that he can grant us his forgiveness!"²⁰

It is not possible for us to comprehend how deep God's love upon us is.

But when he heard this, he said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners."

Matthew 9:12-13

19 Catechism of the Catholic Church #1866.
http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_P6D.HTM accessed 30 May 2017

20 Pope Benedict XVI, Apostolic Letter Proclaiming a Year for Priests on the 150th Anniversary of the "dies natalis" of the Curé of Ars, 2009 http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/letters/2009/documents/hf_ben-xvi_let_20090616_anno-sacerdotale.html accessed 23 Jun 2017



Statue of St John Vianney, Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Hong Kong, July 2017.

Chapter 4

Bullying with Gifts

A Shield as a Sword

I liked justifying my actions, using them as “a shield not a sword”. The idea of something being “used as a shield not a sword” was made known under *Combe v Combe* [1951] 2 KB 215 in the UK Court of Appeal. In the *Combe* case Lord LJ Denning judged that an equitable doctrine promissory estoppel could only be used as a shield not a sword, which meant that the doctrine could only be used as a defence and could not be used as a cause of action.²¹ One day I had a vision I was holding a shield without a sword in a fight. I used the shield to knock the weapon down from my attacker (first, I protected myself successfully!). He then became unarmed. But then I also advanced to attack him with the shield to strike blows; I had the upper hand. The vision ended at this point. I was not sure whether the attacker ran away or we continued to fight. All I knew was that my shield could harm others. Then I related the vision to my real life and was aware

²¹ Extracted from Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Combe_v_Combe> accessed 30 May 2017

that the “shield” I referred to was my literacy and analytical skills; and my relentless character. Did I go too far? Probably. If so, I felt like I had mis-used my gifts. In the Parable of the Talents,²² the servant who was given one talent did nothing to gain other talents, was then condemned by his master. It means that we should use our gifts in service to God and others. How about the people like myself, who might have abused their talents?

Power of Confession

It is an exceptional blessing to me that I have the opportunity to write this book on the topic of forgiveness. During the course of preparation, I kept on reviewing faults that I made in my life, though the review often took place subconsciously. On another day my past faults came up: disguising myself as a boy to trick a schoolmate, hurting my neighbour, friends and even my daughters physically or emotionally, bullying people, and failing to take certain actions that I should have. Actually I received many gifts from God, like strength, friendliness, and the skills and character mentioned above. I had used my gifts to bully others and gain status for myself!

I was sure I would have behaved differently if I were more compassionate and considerate. Instantly I had a strong feeling of unworthiness – of being unworthy to receive God’s grace. On the other hand, I was not sure if I had

confessed all these past faults or had described them specifically with enough details as required by the Sacrament of Reconciliation. On the following Sunday, I made a Confession. I told the priest my faults and my doubts as to whether or not my sins were atoned for and had been forgiven by God. “Sins make people humble,” the priest said gently when giving advice. When absolving my sins, he deliberately spoke the following words slowly and with a louder voice, “God absolves ALL of your sins.” I was relieved by this clear message and moved by the priest’s kindness. The priest had expressed God’s mercy and love without reservation. I felt the power of the Sacrament: relief from guilt and worries, feeling renewed while experiencing the joy of being loved by God, though I doubt if words alone could ever describe my feeling. After coming out from the confessional, with tears of joy, I determined to help spread the Good News. I was deeply grateful to be a Catholic and that we had the grace to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. I would say this was one of the most impactful Reconciliations that I ever received. Conversion and the joy of being forgiven are graces from God and graces are to be shared.

²² Matthew 25: 14-30

But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!" For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people."

Luke 5:8-10

"Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!" (Luke 5:8)

House of Pontifical Institute of Foreign Missions, Hong Kong,
January 2017.





About the Book

As a lay Catholic, in this book Cindy Yuen Chan asks the question: how one can learn to be more forgiving?

Starting from reflecting on her own faults and herself as being an offender, Cindy shares how Catholic teachings brought more forgiveness into her life and help her to live a grateful life. This book shares her insights while exploring how forgiveness relates to salvation, empathy and justice.

The narrative message of this book is healing, in which Cindy uses examples showing how God healed His followers, from a hurt student to family members of murdered victims.

The backbone of forgiveness is ...

It is our choice ...

When the Cock Crows for the Second Time is worth reading; not only to Catholics and Christians, but also people who do not yet know Jesus.

About the Author

Cindy Yuen Chan was baptized as a Catholic in her teens. She received training in Clinical Pastoral Education and worked as a volunteer in oncology and medical wards. She is a member of the Formation Group and the Parish Bereavement Group at her church.

Cindy is a medical laboratory technologist. She lives with her husband and daughters in Hong Kong. She also authored two books, *Crossing My Path* in 2011 and *A Bridge between Lives – A Discussion about Death* in 2015. You may reach her at crossingmypath@gmail.com



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