

Pain

Pain is taking place in this animal.
Animals react to pain and humans under anesthesia or a drug react to pain. Humans answer questions while asleep.

Suffering

Although commonly synonymous with pain, suffering is rather the reaction to pain, and in this sense suffering is a decisive factor in Christian spirituality. ... suffering is the result of sin having entered the world. ... purpose is to enable the believer to offer God a sacrifice of praise of his divine right over creatures, to unite oneself with Christ in his sufferings as an expression of love, and in the process to become more like Christ, who, having joy set before him, chose the Cross, and thus "to make up all that has still to be undergone by Christ for the sake of His body, the Church" (1 Cor 1:24)
[Modern Catholic Dictionary]

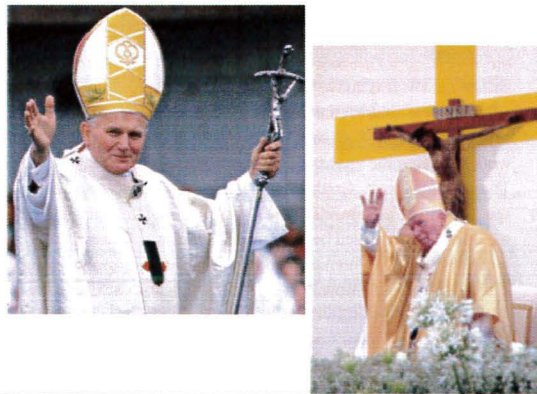
Pope Saint John Paul II

By suffering we mean more than sickness ... It includes both physical and moral pain ... Including: the danger of death, the death of loved ones, the lack of children, nostalgia for home, loneliness and abandonment, the remorse of conscience, the difficulty of understanding why the wicked prosper and the just suffer, the unfaithfulness of friends, and more. In short, "man suffers whenever he experiences any kind of evil."

[Salvifici Doloris 6-7 (On the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering)]

Pope St. John Paul II

- He was in third grade when his **mother died**
- His only sibling, an **older brother, died** three years later
- He discovered his **father dead** on the floor in their apartment.
- Karol Wojtyla (Pope Saint John Paul II) was an **orphan at twenty**.
- Nazis** overran his country, and he did hard labor in a stone quarry.
- During Nazi rule, **many of his friends were killed**, some in concentration camps, others shot by the Gestapo for the crime of studying for the priesthood. He was run down by a German truck and nearly died.
- Poland** came **under a dictator's rule** (Joseph Stalin) after Adolf Hitler.
- At sixty, an Islamic assassin shot him** in his own front yard (Vatican) and he nearly died again.
- As an old man, he **suffered from debilitating Parkinson's disease** that rendered him immobile, distorted his physical appearance, and finally took his ability to speak. Pope John Paul II knew about human suffering.
- Yet, he was a man **overflowing with joy and Hope!**
- He discovered the meaning of suffering. He had found an "answer" to the problem of pain.

Pope St. John Paul II

My son, when you come to serve the LORD, prepare yourself for trials. ⁴Accept whatever befalls you, in crushing misfortune be patient; ⁵**For in fire gold is tested, and worthy men in the crucible of humiliation.** ¹⁰Study the generations long past and understand; has anyone hoped in the LORD and been disappointed? Has anyone persevered in his fear and been forsaken? has anyone called upon him and been rebuffed? (Sirach 2:1-10)

⁵Chastised a little, they shall be greatly blessed, because God tried them and found them worthy of himself. ⁶As gold in the furnace, he proved them, and as sacrificial offerings he took them to himself.
(Wisdom 3:5-6)

There is a spiritual reflection which says that a metal smith was asked: "How do you know when the Gold is purified?" He responded: "The Gold is purified, when you take the gold out of the fire and look at it, and all you see is your face." That is the image that Scripture is using. What God wants to do is look at us and all He sees is the face of His Son. Suffering is often how our impurities and impediments are burned up.

¹⁶Therefore, we are not discouraged; rather, although our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷For this momentary light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, ¹⁸as we look not to what is seen but to what is unseen; for what is seen is transitory, but what is unseen is eternal. (2 Corinthians 4:16-18)

"Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ on behalf of his body, which is the church." (Colossians 1:24)

¹²Beloved, do not be surprised that a trial by fire is occurring among you, as if something strange were happening to you. ¹³But rejoice to the extent that you share in the sufferings of Christ, so that when his glory is revealed you may also rejoice exultantly. (1 Peter 4:12-13)

Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me." (1 Mk 8:34, also Mt 16:24, Lk 14:27)

Pope St. John Paul II

"... people react to suffering in different ways. But in general it can be said that almost always the individual enters suffering with a typically human protest and with the question "why". He asks the meaning of his suffering and seeks an answer to this question on the human level. Certainly he often puts this question to God, and to Christ. Furthermore, he cannot help noticing that the one to whom he puts the question is himself suffering and wishes to answer him from the Cross, from the heart of his own suffering. Nevertheless, it often takes time, even a long time, for this answer to begin to be interiorly perceived. For Christ does not answer directly and he does not answer in the abstract this human questioning about the meaning of suffering. Man hears Christ's saving answer as he himself gradually becomes a sharer in the sufferings of Christ.

Pope St. John Paul II

"The answer which comes through this sharing, by way of the interior encounter with the Master, is in itself *something more than the mere abstract answer* to the question about the meaning of suffering. For it is above all a call. It is a vocation. Christ does not explain in the abstract the reasons for suffering, but before all else he says: "Follow me!". Come! Take part through your suffering in this work of saving the world, a salvation achieved through my suffering! Through my Cross. Gradually, *as the individual takes up his cross*, spiritually uniting himself to the Cross of Christ, the salvific meaning of suffering is revealed before him. He does not discover this meaning at his own human level, but at the level of the suffering of Christ. At the same time, however, from this level of Christ the salvific meaning of suffering *descends to man's level* and becomes, in a sense, the individual's personal response. It is then that man finds in his suffering interior peace and even spiritual joy.

[Salvifici Doloris 26 (On the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering)]

Jesus said in Matthew's Gospel, when He sent the Apostles (*the Church*) out: "Know that I am with you always" (Mt 28:20). Later on, St. Paul would write about an affliction ... a thorn in the flesh that he had. St. Paul begged God three times that this be taken away. God said No.

St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "My grace is sufficient for you; for My power is made perfect in weakness." (2 Cor 12:9)

Jesus prayed in the Agony in the Garden: "Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me; still, not my will but yours be done." (Lk 22:42)

To be a Christian is not to desire pain or suffering. But when (*not if*) we have suffering, what do we do with it? Join it to the suffering of Jesus. There are things we can't change ... serenity prayer: "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference." ... But we can count on God's grace, His strength, His power. His grace is enough, He promised. [*we don't get the grace to go through what others are going through ... he just gives us the grace we need to go through what we are suffering.*] God loves me (each one of us) just as we are. We don't have to "DO" anything to get God to love us. He wants us to join our suffering to His.

Mother Teresa

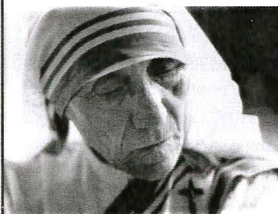
"Suffering in itself has no value. The greatest gift we can enjoy is the possibility to share Christ's passion."

"Suffering will never be completely absent from our lives. If we accept it with faith, we are given the opportunity to share the passion of Jesus and show him our love. One day I went to visit a lady who had terminal cancer. Her pain was tremendous. I told her, "This is nothing but Jesus' kiss, a sign that you are so close to him on the cross that he can kiss you." She joined her hands and said, "Mother, ask Jesus not to stop kissing me."

"The cross is never found in a beautiful room, but in Calvary. Those who want to belong to Jesus have to feel happy to walk with him. No matter how painful it is, we have to share His passion."

[Mother Teresa: In My Own Words]

Mother Teresa



Victor Frankl's "Man's Search for Meaning" a prisoner in WWII ... observed that people who had something to live for, found the means by which they could endure the Hell / suffering of the concentration camp. Frankl's "equation:" **Suffering-meaning= Despair.**

Frank Sheed said: **"Jesus on the cross was more active than He ever had been."** The world was not saved by His miracles, or His parables ... The world was saved by His passion. And so it can be for us.

Pope St. John Paul II

"The Redeemer suffered in place of man and for man. Every man has his own share in the Redemption. Each one is also called to share in that suffering through which the Redemption was accomplished. He is called to share in that suffering through which all human suffering has also been redeemed. In bringing about the Redemption through suffering, Christ has also raised human suffering to the level of the Redemption. Thus each man, in his suffering, can also become a sharer in the redemptive suffering of Christ. [Salvifici Doloris 26 (On the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering)]

[that is the meaning of suffering The only thing lacking in the sufferings of Christ is our participation in it ... and when, not if, it comes our way, we can unite it to His cross [resist the temptation to complain] ... our suffering, when united to His cross is not in vain.]

¹³We do not want you to be unaware, brothers, about those who have fallen asleep, **so that you may not grieve like the rest, who have no hope.** ¹⁴For if we believe that Jesus died and rose, so too will God, through Jesus, bring with him those who have fallen asleep. (1 Thes 4:13-18)

The author of the letter to the Hebrews talks about being: being surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us rid ourselves of every burden and sin that clings to us and persevere in running the race that lies before us ³while keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus, the leader and perfecter of faith. ⁴In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood. ⁵You have also forgotten the exhortation addressed to you as sons: "My son, do not disdain the discipline of the Lord or lose heart when reproved by him; ⁶for whom the Lord loves, he disciplines; he scourges every son he acknowledges." ⁷Endure your trials as "discipline"; God treats you as sons. For what "son" is there whom his father does not discipline? (Heb 12:1-7)

Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ on behalf of his body, which is the church. (Col 1:24)

²⁶As for the dead being raised, have you not read in the Book of Moses, in the passage about the bush, how God told him, "I am the God of Abraham, (the) God of Isaac, and (the) God of Jacob"? ²⁷He is not God of the dead but of the living. (Mk 12:26-27)

²¹Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²²(But) even now I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give you." ²³Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise." ²⁴Martha said to him, "I know he will rise, in the resurrection on the last day." ²⁵Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, ²⁶and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" ²⁷She said to him, "Yes, Lord. I have come to believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world." (Jn 11:21-27)

Do you believe this ... and if you do, can anyone tell? One of the strongest ways we can show forth our faith is how we deal with grief ... are we able to grieve with great hope, because we know that Jesus is the resurrection and the life.



Christ, the final Adam, by the revelation of the mystery of the Father and His love, fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear.

[Vatican II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church in the Modern World #22 (Gaudium et Spes)]

The Lord not only reveals to us who He is, but who we are. Jesus is teaching us how to be authentically human. Jesus teaches us how to grieve. He grieves at Lazarus' death, and at the rejection of Jerusalem. Jesus is not powerless. Jesus conquered sin by His death, and He conquered death by His resurrection. **Death is a human reality. The right human response is to miss them, to pray for them.**

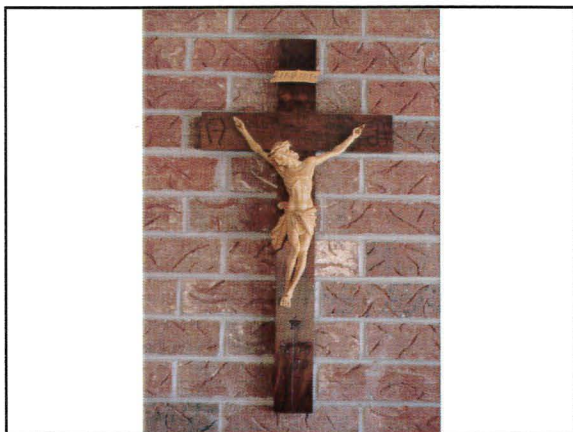
The day was now approaching when my mother Monica would depart from this life; you know that day, Lord, though we did not. ... She fell sick with a fever. Then one day during the course of her illness she became unconscious and for a while she was unaware of her surroundings. My brother and I rushed to her side, but she regained consciousness quickly. She looked at us as we stood there and asked in a puzzled voice: "Where was I?"

We were overwhelmed with grief, but she held her gaze steadily upon us, and spoke further: "Here you shall bury your mother." I remained silent as I held back my tears. However, my brother haltingly expressed his hope that she might not die in a strange country but in her own land, since her end would be happier there. When she heard this, her face was filled with anxiety, and she reproached him with a glance because he had entertained such earthly thoughts. Then she looked at me and spoke: "Look what he is saying." Thereupon she said to both of us, **"Bury my body wherever you will; let not care of it cause you any concern. One thing only I ask you, that you remember me at the Altar of the Lord wherever you may be."** Once our mother had expressed this desire as best she could, she fell silent as the pain of her illness increased. [From the Confessions of Saint Augustine, bishop]

"This is the will of God, your holiness" (1 Thes 4:3)

Join your suffering to the suffering of Jesus. Let Jesus draw you to holiness ... to be a saint ... to **Grieve with Hope!**

Do you believe this ... and if you do, can anyone tell? One of the strongest ways we can show forth our faith is how we deal with grief ... are we able to grieve with great hope, because we know that Jesus is the resurrection and the life.



Let us sing alleluia here on earth, while we still live in anxiety, so that we may sing it one day in heaven in full security.

So, then, my brothers, let us sing now, not in order to enjoy a life of leisure, but in order to lighten our labors. You should sing as wayfarers do—sing, but continue your journey. Do not be lazy, but sing to make your journey more enjoyable. Sing, but keep going. What do I mean by keep going? Keep on making progress. This progress, however, must be in virtue; for there are some, the Apostle warns, whose only progress is in vice. If you make progress, you will be continuing your journey, but be sure that your progress is in virtue, true faith and right living. Sing then, but keep going.

[From the Confessions of Saint Augustine, bishop]