

# Reflections

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## Suffering and the Cross

Suffering is something which disgusts men and women. For many, the reality of suffering is precisely the proof that God does not exist: it seems impossible for them that an all-powerful Being, full of love, would not use that love and that power to prevent wars, murders, injustices, children who are born deformed, cancer which kills mothers when their children most need them, etc.

Much more is asked of the Christian: not only to believe in God in spite of the existence of suffering, but to also know how to accept that suffering as a way of love.

This is the point where the attitudes divide and where it is decided if we are Christians or not. We are true Christians from the moment in which we accept the Cross because it is on the Cross where our heart of a child is proven.

The Cross emerges when our will “crosses” with the will of the Father God: when I want something and He asks me for something else or permits that something happens which is contrary to my desires. If I then accept the Cross, I become a true child because I demonstrate that I trust in my Father because I believe that His ways are wiser than mine and that I allow myself to be led by them – renouncing my own – even if it hurts me.

Being good, God could never allow bad for bad if something good would not come from it. What happens is that we do not always discover the positive fruitfulness which comes forth from the bad because we do not know the totality of God’s plan.

Perhaps in Heaven we will understand the meaning of many of our sufferings. In Heaven – when we see the total plan which God had for our life – we will understand that all our sufferings were permitted by God because of love: to correct us and educate us, to free us from selfishness and from the fondness for earthly goods, to obligate us to grow in new dimensions, to enrich us spiritually.

Therefore, suffering is not a punishment from God but, on the contrary, a proof of his love as a Father. St. Peter compares suffering to a melting pot where God purifies the gold of our faith and of our love.

When God allows suffering, it means that He is giving us an opportunity to grow in love and confidence, to develop new aspects of our Christian personality which until now were dormant, atrophied or sick.

Christ and the Blessed Virgin suffered greatly, precisely because they were the most loved by God. This has also been the destiny of all the saints, the great favorites of God.

All suffering and Cross which we accept as Christians is always a participation in the Passion of Christ. He surrendered unto the Cross as expiation for our sins. In this way, we participate through our suffering in this expiation not only by our own sins but also by the sins of others.

And when we are given a new Cross, we should view it in union with Him, our Redeemer. When we see our Cross in this way, as a part of His Cross, we learn more easily to carry it patiently, obediently, and in time even joyfully.

This is how, above all, Mary the Mother of Jesus did it. She accompanied Him during His life in the happy times and in the difficult times, even to the foot of the Cross. Therefore, it is not only Christ who is with us in times of pain, but also His Mother – who is our Mother – She is with us at the foot of our Cross.

And in the measure in which we participate like Her in the Passion of Jesus, we also have the promise to participate in the glorified life of Christ in Heaven just as She is participating since her Assumption.

At each Eucharist, let us place our suffering and personal Cross on the paten as our offering in order to unite it with the perfect sacrifice of Christ on the Cross.

### Questions for reflection

1. Which are the crosses I fear most?
2. Do I believe God punishes me or is unjust with me?
3. Do I offer my crosses and my sufferings?

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