

SUFFERING – AS SEEN THROUGH THE EYES OF SAINTS

Compiled by an EnCourage dad

*“Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake,
and in my flesh I complete what is lacking
in the afflictions of Christ for the sake of His Body,
that is, the Church.”
(Colossians 1:24)*

*“We also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that
suffering produces perseverance;
perseverance, character; and character, hope.”
(Romans 5:3-4)*

As iron is fashioned by fire and on the anvil, so in the fire of suffering and under the weight of trials, our souls receive that form which our Lord desires them to have.
(St. Madeline Sophie Barat)

If God gives you an abundant harvest of trials, it is a sign of great holiness which He desires you to attain. Do you want to become a great saint? Ask God to send you many sufferings. The flame of Divine Love never rises higher than when fed with the wood of the Cross, which the infinite charity of the Savior used to finish His sacrifice. All the pleasures of the world are nothing compared with the sweetness found in the gall and vinegar offered to Jesus Christ, that is, hard and painful things endured for Jesus Christ and with Jesus Christ.
(St. Ignatius of Loyola)

When it is all over you will not regret having suffered; rather you will regret having suffered so little, and suffered that little so badly.
(St. Sebastian Valfre)

I do not desire to die soon, because in Heaven there is no suffering. I desire to live a long time because I yearn to suffer much for the love of my Spouse.
(St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi)

You will be consoled according to the greatness of your sorrow and affliction; the greater the suffering, the greater will be the reward.
(St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi)

The road is narrow. He who wishes to travel it more easily must cast off all things and use the cross as his cane. In other words, he must be truly resolved to suffer willingly for the love of God in all things.
(St. John of the Cross)

For my heart is always with Him, day and night it thinks unceasingly of its heavenly and divine Friend, to whom it wants to prove its affection. Also within it arises this desire: not to die, but to suffer long, to suffer for God, to give Him its life while praying for poor sinners.
(St. Elizabeth of the Trinity)

Always remember to love your neighbor; always prefer the one who tries your patience, who tests your virtue, because with her you can always merit: suffering is Love; the Law is Love.
(Blessed Mary of Jesus Crucified)

I desire to suffer always and not to die. I should add: this is not my will, it is my inclination. It is sweet to think of Jesus; but it is sweeter to do His will.
(Bl Mary of Jesus Crucified)

For Jesus Christ I am prepared to suffer still more.
(St. Maximilian Kolbe)

If God sends you many sufferings, it is a sign that He has great plans for you and certainly wants to make you a saint.
(St. Ignatius Loyola)

One must not think that a person who is suffering is not praying. He is offering up his sufferings to God, and many a time he is praying much more truly than one who goes away by himself and meditates his head off, and, if he has squeezed out a few tears, thinks that is prayer.
(St. Teresa of Avila)

Blessed be He, Who came into the world for no other purpose than to suffer.
(St. Teresa of Avila)

Suffering is a great favor. Remember that everything soon comes to an end . . . and take courage. Think of how our gain is eternal.
(St. Teresa of Avila)

In order to purify a soul, Jesus uses whatever instruments he likes. My soul underwent a complete abandonment on the part of creatures; often my best intentions were misinterpreted by the sisters, a type of suffering which is most painful; but God allows it, and we must accept it because in this way we become more like Jesus.
(St. Faustina Kowalska)

Suffering is a great grace; through suffering the soul becomes like the Saviour; in suffering love becomes crystalized; the greater the suffering, the purer the love.
(St. Faustina Kowalska)

He who wishes to love God does not truly love Him if he has not an ardent and constant desire to suffer for His sake.
(St. Aloysius Gonzaga)

In suffering love and in loving, suffer!
(Blessed Maria Lopez of Jesus)

It is You Jesus, stretched out on the cross, who give me strength and are always close to the suffering soul. Creatures will abandon a person in his suffering, but You, O Lord, are faithful.
(St. Faustina Kowalska)

One day, I saw two roads. One was broad, covered with sand and flowers, full of joy, music and all sorts of pleasures. People walked along it, dancing and enjoying themselves. They reached the end of the road without realizing it. And at the end of the road there was a horrible precipice; that is, the abyss of hell. The souls fell blindly into it; as they walked, so they fell. And there numbers were so great that it was impossible to count them. And I saw the other road, or rather, a path, for it was narrow and strewn with thorns and rocks; and the people who walked along it had tears in their eyes, and all kinds of suffering befell them. Some fell down upon the rocks, but stood up immediately and went on. At the end of the road there was a magnificent garden filled with all sorts of happiness, and all these souls entered there. At the very first instant they forgot all their sufferings.
(St. Faustina Kowalska)

I always want to see you behaving like a brave soldier who does not complain about his own suffering but takes his comrades' wounds seriously and treats his own as nothing but scratches.
(St. Therese of Lisieux to her novices)

We should strive to keep our hearts open to the sufferings and wretchedness of other people and pray continually that God may grant us that spirit of compassion which is truly the spirit of God. (St. Vincent de Paul)

All the science of the Saints is included in these two things: To do, and to suffer. And whoever had done these two things best, has made himself most saintly. (St. Francis de Sales)

God had one son on earth without sin, but never one without suffering. (St. Augustine of Hippo)

The more the wicked abound, so much the more must we suffer with them in patience; for on the threshing floor few are the grains carried into the barns, but high are the piles of chaff burned with fire. (Pope St. Gregory the Great)

Nothing afflicts the heart of Jesus so much as to see all His sufferings of no avail to so many. (St. John Mary Vianney)

I see around me a multitude of those who, blindly persevering in error, despise the true God; but I am a Christian nevertheless, and I follow the instruction of the Apostles. If this deserves chastisement, reward it; for I am determined to suffer every torture rather than become the slave of the devil. Others may do as they please since they are [...] reckless of the future life, which is to be obtained only by sufferings. Scripture tells us that "narrow is the way that leads to life" [...] because it is one of affliction and of persecutions suffered for the sake of justice; but it is wide enough for those who walk upon it, because their faith and the hope of an eternal reward make it so for them. [...] On the contrary, the road of vice is in reality narrow, and it leads to an eternal precipice. (St. Leo of Patara)

Our Lord and Savior lifted up his voice and said with incomparable majesty: "Let all men know that grace comes after tribulation. Let them know that without the burden of afflictions it is impossible to reach the height of grace. Let them know that the gifts of grace increase as the struggles increase. Let men take care not to stray and be deceived. This is the only true stairway to paradise, and without the cross they can find no road to climb to heaven." (St. Rose of Lima)

When I heard these words, a strong force came upon me and seemed to place me in the middle of a street, so that I might say in a loud voice to people of every age, sex and status: "Hear, O people; hear, O nations. I am warning you about the commandment of Christ by using words that came from his own lips: We cannot obtain grace unless we suffer afflictions. We must heap trouble upon trouble to attain a deep participation in the divine nature, the glory of the sons of God and perfect happiness of soul." (St. Rose of Lima)

If only mortals would learn how great it is to possess divine grace, how beautiful, how noble, how precious. How many riches it hides within itself, how many joys and delights! No one would complain about his cross or about troubles that may happen to him, if he would come to know the scales on which they are weighed when they are distributed to men." (St. Rose of Lima)

If you want suffering you will have joy, and if you want joy you will have suffering. (St. Catherine of Siena)

The nothing keeps silent, the nothing does not want to be, the nothing suffers all. The nothing does not impose itself, the nothing does not command with authority, and finally, the nothing in the creature is practical humility. (St. Angela of the Cross Guerrero)

If you really want to love Jesus, first learn to suffer, because suffering teaches you to love. (St. Gemma Galgani)

If you seek patience, you will find no better example than the cross. Great patience occurs in two ways: either when one patiently suffers much, or when one suffers things which one is able to avoid and yet does not avoid. Christ endured much on the cross, and did so patiently, because when he suffered he did not threaten; he was led like a sheep to the slaughter and he did not open his mouth. (St. Thomas Aquinas)

Let us therefore without ceasing hold fast by our hope and by the earnestness of our righteousness, which is Jesus Christ who took up our sins in His own body upon the tree, who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth, but for our sakes He endured all things, that we might live in Him. Let us therefore become imitators of His endurance; and if we should suffer for His name's sake, let us glorify Him. For He gave this example to us in His own person, and we believed this. (St. Polycarp of Smyrna)

Oh, if you had tasted the delights with which God fills the souls of those who serve him and suffer for him, how would you condemn all that the world can promise! I now begin to be a disciple of Jesus Christ, since for his love I am in prison, where I suffer much. But I assure you, that when I am fainting with hunger, God hath fortified me by his sweet consolations, so that I have looked upon myself as well recompensed for his service. And though I were yet to pass many years in prison, the time would appear short, through the extreme desire which I feel of suffering for him, who even here so well repays our labours. Besides other sickness, I have been afflicted with a continual fever a hundred days without any remedies or proper nourishment. All this time my heart was so full of joy that it seemed to me too narrow to contain it. I have never felt any equal to it, and I thought myself at the gates of paradise. (Blessed Charles Spinola)

If we only knew the precious treasure hidden in infirmities, we would receive them with the same joy with which we receive the greatest benefits, and we would bear them without ever complaining or showing signs of weariness. (St. Vincent de Paul)

Dear brothers and sisters, I pray God may open your eyes and let you see what hidden treasures he bestows on us in the trials from which the world thinks only to flee. Shame turns into honor when we seek God's glory. Present affliction become the source of heavenly glory. To those who suffer wounds in fighting his battles, God opens his arms in loving, tender friendship. That is why he (Christ) tells us that if we want to join him, we shall travel the way he took. It is surely not right that the Son of God should go his way on the path of shame while the sons of men walk the way of worldly honor: "The disciple is not above his teacher, nor the servant greater than his master." (St. John of Avila)