

UNBEARABLE  
SUFFERINGS





Rewrite your narrative.

Shift your paradigm.

Welcome to Reality and Joy.





**SOCIETY** will tell you your suffering is unnecessary and pointless. Or that you should just end it. Or that you are impaired for life with a “chemical imbalance,” (and thus must be a life-customer of Big Pharma). Know the truth to be freed and find the most profound, imperturbable happiness which no circumstances can destroy.

Read on...

Most people live life as waterbugs, skimming along the surface, tossed about when storms hit. But *we must become whales!* diving into profound depths of peace and joy, where storms cannot assail our true being ...

Sufferings can never really make us unhappy. There is really no evil in the world except the evil arising within a person's heart, and manifesting in deleterious behavior. GOD, Who loves us tenderly, has no other object in sending us sufferings but to make us happy. What we count as an evil in suffering is the bitterness of the medicine that is necessary for the health of our soul.

A person can suffer in body or soul or both. The apostles, when they were scourged (Acts v. 41), suffered in body; Judas, when he threw down the pieces of silver in the Temple, suffered in his soul. Holy Job suffered in both. Suffering is either merited or unmerited. The sufferings

of the prodigal son were merited, those of the patriarch Joseph were unmerited. Yet all sufferings are merited by original sin.

**No one can attain to eternal salvation without suffering.**

“No one is crowned unless he strive lawfully” (2 Tim. ii. 5).

Even Christ had to enter into His glory through suffering (Luke xxiv. 26). Our Lord says “He that taketh not up his cross and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me” (Matt. x. 38). The road to heaven is a rough one. In order to make the flax that grows in the earth into pure white linen, it must be rubbed, stretched, and thoroughly cleansed, and woven. The corn has to be threshed and winnowed; the pure gold has to pass through fire. Not to suffer is a sign that no future happiness is in store for you. Suffering and holiness are inseparably bound up together. There is no good work that does not meet with obstacles, no virtue that does not have to fight and struggle.

For this reason GOD leaves no just man without suffering.

GOD treats us as a physician treats his patients; those of whose recovery he despairs he leaves alone; but to those whom he hopes to cure, he administers bitter medicines. As milk is the food of children, so are contradictions the food of GOD's elect. To His chosen GOD gives a sword on earth to pierce their heart, and a crown in heaven to adorn their heads. Yet GOD mingles with the bitterness of suffering the sweets of consolation. We see this throughout the history of Our Lady, which consists of alternate joys and sorrows. So, too, we celebrate the seven joys and sorrows of St. Joseph.

**All suffering comes from GOD, and is a sign of His love and favor.**

We find in the lives of the saints that the more good works they undertook for GOD, the more did suffering assail them, as in the case of Tobias, and of holy Job.

Sufferings seem to be the reward of good works performed. They are a precious gift, which will avail us to all eternity. To suffer something for GOD is in itself a great privilege and honor. It is a better gift than that of performing miracles and raising the dead. Parents often punish their children to cure them of their faults. If they see the same faults in the children of others, they do not trouble themselves about them, because they do not care for them. So it is with GOD; the children whom He loves He often corrects. Hence Raphael said to Tobias, "Because thou wast pleasing to GOD, it was necessary that temptation should prove thee" (Tob. xii. 13). St. Paul says, "Whom the Lord loveth He chastiseth; and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth" (Heb. xii. 6). "Gold and silver are tried in the fire, and acceptable men in the furnace of tribulation" (Ecclus. ii. 5). The greater a saint, the greater were in most cases his sufferings. Our Lady was

the Queen of martyrs. The apostles had to suffer much, especially St. Peter and St. Paul (Cf. 2 Cor. xi. 23, seq.). To be free from suffering is a bad sign. St. Augustine says: "There is no greater misfortune than the good fortune of sinners. He who does not suffer now will have to suffer hereafter."

Yet GOD never sends us any suffering that is beyond our powers of endurance.

St. Paul says "GOD is faithful; Who will not permit you to suffer above that which you are able" (1 Cor. x. 13). The peasant knows how much his beast of burden can carry, and does not load him beyond his strength. Will GOD, the all-wise, the all-merciful, lay more on us than we can bear? The potter does not leave his vessels too long in the fire lest they should crack. He who plays on an instrument is careful not to tighten the strings too much, lest they should break; nor too little, for then they would produce no sound. The physician apportions his remedies to the power of his pa-

tient; so the heavenly Physician sends us sufferings in proportion to our power of bearing them. There are some people who make sufferings for themselves, because they find fault with what gives no cause for complaint. Even in real sufferings much complaining is a sign of faint-heartedness and makes us more sensible to suffering.

**GOD sends suffering to the sinner to bring him back into the right way and to save him from eternal death.**

How many have been converted by means of sufferings, e.g., Manasses in the prison at Babylon (2 Paral. xxxiii. 12, 13), Jonas, the prodigal son, even the wicked Achab (3 Kings xxi. 27). GOD is like a surgeon, who cuts away the diseased flesh that it may not cause death. Sufferings also bring about a disgust for earthly things and make the sinful pleasures of the world bitter; they destroy our dependence on earthly things, and take away the desire for the enjoyments and the pleasures of this valley of tears, and

turn our thoughts to heaven. Sufferings again impress upon us our own helplessness, compel us to have recourse to GOD in prayer. They teach us a knowledge of ourselves and of our own sinfulness. As the trees, after the winter, flower and bring forth fruit, so does man after suffering bring forth works pleasing to GOD. "Sufferings," says St. Teresa, "though very hard to bear, are the surest way to GOD."

GOD frequently sends bodily sickness to the sinner for the healing of the sickness of his soul.

How many there are who have been converted to GOD through the means of bodily sickness, e.g., St. Francis of Assisi and St. Ignatius of Loyola. The Wise Man says, "A grievous sickness makes the soul sober" (Ecclus. xxxi. 2). In sickness GOD knocks at the door of the heart and asks for admission. "I am always glad," said St. Ignatius, "when I see a sinner fall ill, for sickness brings back to GOD."

How foolish it is then to regard sickness as a mark of GOD's anger, when it is really a mark of His compassion.

**GOD sends suffering to the just man to try him whether he loves GOD most or creatures.**

Job, who had always lived a GOD-fearing life, lost all his property, his children, and his health, and was derided by his wife and his friends. Tobias had buried the dead at the peril of his life and given most liberal alms. GOD took away his sight, and left him poor and unable to earn anything for himself. Thus GOD tries His friends. As the storm tests the tree, whether it is firmly rooted, so suffering tests the just, whether they are firmly established in their love of GOD. As the wind separates the chaff from the wheat, so trouble marks off the sinner from the just. Sweet herbs smell the sweetest when they are bruised; so the just are most pleasing to GOD in the time of tribulation.

GOD often takes away from us what we love best, and that which is injurious or dangerous, just as a father takes from his little child a razor or sharp knife.

At the same time the sufferings of the just man are a great advantage to him; they serve him as a penance for his sins; they cleanse him from all imperfections; increase his zeal in the practice of good, in the love of GOD, and in the love of prayer; they also increase his merit in heaven, and often, too, his happiness in this world.

By sufferings the punishment due for sin is cancelled. Hence St. Augustine prayed, "In this life, O Lord, burn, scorch, and wound me, only spare me in the life to come." "Think yourself happy," said St. Francis Xavier, "if you can exchange the agonizing pains of purgatory for sufferings in this world." Sufferings also purify the soul from its imperfections. Gold is tried in the fire; so the soul is purged by suffering. "Every branch that bears fruit

GOD purges, that it may bring forth more fruit” (John xv. 2). A sharp file cleanses iron from rust. As soap cleanses the body, so suffering cleanses the soul. Suffering also increases our strength, just as the blows of the hammer make the iron stronger and harder. Toil strengthens the body; suffering strengthens the soul. The vessels that the potter places in the fire come out hard and strong. Suffering also adds to our love of GOD. As the ark of Noe was raised nearer to heaven by the floods that overspread the earth, so we are brought nearer to heaven and to GOD by the floods of suffering. As the gold leaf is spread out by the blows of the hammer, so our love of GOD is extended by suffering. Sufferings detach us from the love of earthly things, and destroy our love of this world. Hence St. Augustine prayed, “Make all things bitter to me, that so Thou alone mayest appear sweet to my soul.” Sufferings also increase our gratitude to

GOD, for the loss of health and other gifts of GOD makes us value what we have lost. Sufferings also make us humble. The just must be tried by evil, that so they may not grow proud of their virtues. Sufferings also increase the earnestness of our prayers. They compel us to pray. We see this in the case of the apostles in the storm-tossed boat. The prayers of David under persecution have become the prayers of the Church. Long peace makes us careless and slack. The ox that is not stirred by the goad becomes lazy. Sufferings are often the means of bringing us to prosperity even in this world. Witness Job, the patriarch Joseph, and Tobias. "The Lord maketh poor and maketh rich; He humbleth and He exalteth" (1 Kings ii. 7). "You shall be sorrowful," says Our Lord, "but your sorrow shall be turned into joy" (John xvi. 20). Lastly, sufferings increase our eternal happiness. Our present momentary and light tribulation worketh for us above mea-

sure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory (2 Cor. iv. 17). The just are ripened for heaven by suffering, as ears of corn are ripened by the heat of the sun. Jewels are rendered more beautiful by being ground and polished. "When GOD sends us some great trouble," says St. Ignatius, "it is a sign that He designs great things for us, and desires to raise us to great holiness." Nay, the more we suffer in this life, the greater will be our reward in the life to come. "To those who love GOD all things work together for good" (Rom. viii. 28). Give yourself up, then, to GOD's guidance, for He allows nothing to happen you which will not be for your advantage, though you may see it not. What pruning is to the fruit-tree, suffering is to men.

**Sufferings then are no real evil, but are benefits from the hand of GOD.**

They are the means of bringing us both to temporal and eternal happiness.

GOD, Who loves us tenderly, has no

other object in sending us sufferings but to make us happy. What we count as an evil is the bitterness of the medicine that is necessary for the health of our soul. There is really no evil in the world except sin. Sufferings can never really make us unhappy; men can be happy in spite of all kinds of sufferings. We see this in Job, in Tobias, in Our Lady. St. Paul says, "I am filled with comfort; I exceedingly abound with joy in all our tribulation" (2 Cor. vii. 4).

**For this reason we should be patient under suffering, and should resign ourselves to the will of GOD.**

Nay, more, we should rejoice in suffering, and thank GOD for it.

We should say with Job, "As it hath pleased the Lord, so it is done; blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job i. 21), or with Our Lord in the Garden of Olives, "Not My will, but Thine be done." We should behave as a sensible man behaves when he is sick; he will-

ingly obeys the injunctions of the physician. GOD has lightened our sufferings for us, not only by His own example, but also by the promise of an eternal reward. See how the apostles rejoiced in their scourging (Acts v. 41). The Christian under suffering should rejoice as a workman rejoices who labors much, and looks forward to good pay, or as a tradesman, who amid the toilsome monotony of his business, thinks of the delightful holiday that is not far off. We must grasp sufferings as men grasp stinging nettles if they do not wish to be stung, firmly and boldly, not lightly and timorously; then they will do us no harm. In suffering we should repeat again and again the Gloria Patri. Men too often grumble and grow impatient under their sufferings. If a man asks the return of something he has lent us, we give it back with thanks; but if GOD does so, we grumble and are discontented. This

want of patience increases our sufferings, besides offending GOD. The impatient are like oxen, who kick against the goad and only wound themselves the more. Yet it is no sin to be sorrowful and troubled under suffering; for Our Lord in the Garden of Olives was sorrowful even unto death. We must never despond in evil days, for after sorrow and suffering come joy and gladness.

By patience under suffering we quickly attain to a high degree of perfection, and lay up for ourselves a great store of merit.

When we resign ourselves patiently to the will of GOD amid contradictions, we are like a ship carried on by a strong breeze, and sail rapidly to the haven of eternal rest. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he has been proved, he will receive a crown of life which GOD hath promised to them that love Him" (Jas. i. 12).

From our willingness to suffer can be ascertained how far we have advanced in perfection.

The courage of a soldier displays itself, not in peace, but in war. The sinner murmurs under suffering; the beginner is troubled, but is sorry for his impatience; the man more advanced in virtue is frightened, but takes courage and praises GOD; the perfect man does not wait for suffering, but goes boldly to meet it. The perfect do not ask GOD that they may be free from temptation or from suffering. They desire it, and value it as highly as men of the world value riches and gold and precious stones. Hence the prayer of St. Teresa was either to suffer or to die. "He who is able," says St. Francis of Sales, "to thank GOD equally for chastisement and for prosperity, has arrived at the summit of Christian perfection, and will find his happiness in GOD."

Excerpted from *The Catechism Explained*,  
by Fr. Francis Spirago. Free epub download at  
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