

FAITH CHAT

with James & John

Does God Desire Our Pain And Suffering?

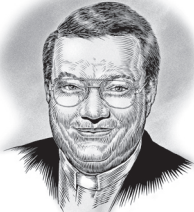
Know This...

God loves us so much that He uses every means, except force, to draw us to Himself. God is not vengeful. He's an all-knowing, all-loving, and all-merciful Father who always knows what we need. Through His free gift of grace God seeks to keep us from harming ourselves through sin. While God permits pain and suffering, He seeks to use pain and suffering to draw us and those we love to Himself.



John: Perhaps the reality of pain and suffering, more than any other human condition regardless of one's religion, causes people to lose their hope and trust in God.

James: While pain and suffering may cause a person's faith to waver, Catholics are challenged to allow their faith in Jesus to deepen as they confront pain and suffering.



John: Most religions struggle to explain the value of suffering; but for 2000 years, the Catholic Church has proclaimed the virtue of redemptive suffering.

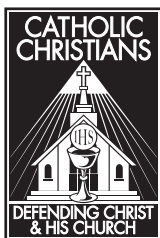
James: When we are ill and suffering, the *Catechism* says we experience "human powerlessness, limitations, and finitude." A faithful Catholic finds strength in Jesus.

John: He gives us the grace we need to resist any temptation to be self-absorbed in our pain and suffering. Instead, we imitate Jesus by offering up our pain and suffering for others.

James: Pain and suffering are a consequence of evil and not a direct consequence of God's will. He only wants to draw us to Himself.

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Jesus said, "Those who are well do not need a physician, but the sick do. I did not come to call the righteous but sinners." ^{Mk 2:17} "Whoever wishes to be my follower must deny his very self, take up his cross each day, and follow in my steps. Whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will save it." ^{Lk 9:23-24}

PAPA SAYS

"By [the Father's] great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and to an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, though now for a little while you may have to suffer various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold which though perishable is tested by fire, may redound to praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ." ^{1 Pet 1:3b-7} "Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal which comes upon you to prove you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice in so far as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed." ^{1 Pet 4:12-13}



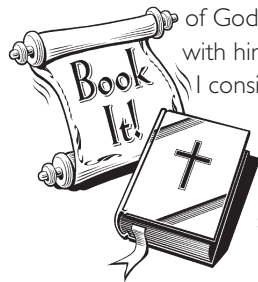
BE ATTITUDES



increase." ^{St. Rose of Lima}

"The prayer of the sick person is his patience and his acceptance of the sickness for the love of Jesus Christ." ^{St. Charles of Sezze} "Without the burden of afflictions it is impossible to reach the height of grace. The gifts of grace increase as the struggles

"When we cry, 'Abba! Father!' it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.



I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us." ^{Rom 8:15b-18} St. Paul also said, "Bear your share of hardship along with me like a good soldier of Christ Jesus." ^{2 Tim 2:3}

All-loving and merciful Father, Your Son's suffering, death, and resurrection opened the gates of heaven for me. Although You do not desire our illness or disease, I know You may call on me to endure pain and suffering. You allow pain and suffering for our salvation. I pray that during these difficult periods Your grace, and the knowledge that Jesus suffered and died for me, will help me "offer up" my suffering for the sake of others. Grant this through Jesus Christ Your Son and my Savior: Amen.

