

Suffering... The great Mystery

by Peter Kreeft

*Suffering... The great Mystery not only of our faith, but of each and every life on this earth.*

I was surprised to find myself writing about this very mysterious yet relevant subject that we all deal with. Please note, as you read along I claim to be no theologian or expert on philosophy or claim to be smart \*smile\* in these matters. I only wish to share my heart with yours. All things for Christ, through His truly unworthy servant.

Most recently I read in a book (1) this quote:

***If we do not suffer, we are not wise.  
If we are not wise, we are not blessed.  
Therefore if we do not suffer, we are not blessed.***

When I read this quote recently it really spoke to me and forced me to ponder my past and look at it differently, a lot differently I had looked at it before. I was struck with an inspiration. It clicked in my mind what this meant. I mean we as Christians are called to look at everything in this world with the eyes of God and not see things the way the world sees things, specifically suffering. The world says suffering is bad, it has no meaning, run from it every chance you get. Yet God says something differently. Look at what our saviour had to do for our price for heaven. Jesus suffered more than any human being ever and He was perfect and without sin, so with this other thinking of the world that suffering is a punishment for sin, the world is certainly wrong about this, it is simply not true! I read in a Catholic magazine (3) article about suffering that we as Christians are called to look at everything in this world with the eyes of God and not see things the way the world sees things, specifically suffering. . When I pondered a little more and thought about my suffering through my life, and more specifically very recently. I had something of a tragedy happen. Yet it was something similar that has happened over and over in my life and in many other people's lives. I just knew even more so now, God was trying to speak to me. C.S Lewis said in one of his books (2):

***God whispers in our pleasures but shouts in our pains.  
Pain is His megaphone to rouse a dulled world***

It was only now after much suffering through my life was I finally able to "get it", especially now. Not to go into details into what the suffering was, but I saw the wisdom in the quote above on suffering and wisdom. I can understand why a recovering drug addict can better help another recovering addict. I can understand why someone who has never done drugs or been addicted to drugs cannot & will not be able to understand an addict in recovery.

My point is that unless we feel in our heart a suffering God has laid out for us, and believe me if you have not had suffering, it will come. Don't consider yourself blessed if you have not suffered as the world sees fit. Pray now for the strength to endure any trials as Jesus told His disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Each time we suffer or endure any hardship, with the help & grace of God we learn something. Sometimes small, sometimes big, or sometimes it is a chain of events that leads you to one great lesson. Each experience of any suffering is to lead us to God, even though it seems we are repelled like 2 negative magnets and indifferent to God almost immediately. I think some of us react this way because we don't really "know" God and we still have a lot to learn. The truth about that is that none of us can claim to know God perfectly, only the Angels and saints in heaven know God truly. Yet we can seek to love Him each day more and more. In This wonderful faith God has given us Himself in the Communion sacrament. This is where we will draw our most strength, because this is truly God. Through my trials of suffering, when it seems I won't be able to endure this pain in my heart, God calls me to Himself and this is in adoration. He also calls us too if we listen to that soft whisper. Oh yes it is so hard to hear, but it is there. In the presence of God, He will teach us & show us what it is He is trying to tell us. All in all, He is always drawing us closer to Himself. Sometimes He has to allow something we clung tightly to to dissolve, or even be torn abruptly from your life so that you can fill that void with Christ even more than before. In this life we are to learn how to serve and love God. In a death experience is where we suffer loss, of the things we did not want to let go of while on earth, the things that kept us from growing in holiness. Yes as hard as it is to imagine we are called to be saints, yet who do we call saints? All who are in heaven are saints.

The greats have SO much to teach us. I wish I could touch on everything, but I can't. I have only begun my journey in understanding suffering a little better, and only eaten the crumbs so to speak on the whole feast that covers a very huge table. I have learned very little, yet I feel it is something worth sharing with you in hopes that God will use me somehow to bring you closer to His heart if you are suffering right now. Christ waits and cries with you, waiting and hoping you will talk to Him. I know this myself, and as hard as it was to reach out, it was really not that hard once I did this each day in my pain. No matter how much I talked about my suffering it did not help compared to my time spent with Jesus. Only He can give us what we need, that being the peace of mind and heart and soul that we need to carry our cross each day. Yes we will fall down, Jesus did. But who are the saints? Did the saints fall down? The saints were people who fell, and got back up!

Suffering is such a personal matter with each of us, yet we all have some pain inside of us. We all as brothers and sisters in Christ in the same God share so many special things together. This most

important thing we share is suffering. I think we do not share enough and that a lot of us are afraid for different reasons. I know that for me, I learn SO much from someone when they open their hearts and share their suffering in a way that is straight from their heart, it helps me to relate and respect and reflect. When it is done in such a way so as to help anyone who may be suffering what this person has gone through. I think this is so important and that we NEED to reach out and put our guard down and share our suffering and the lessons we feel God taught us. Sometimes He is trying to tell someone else the same thing you are learning, but for some reason known only to God, the other person cannot hear unless they hear it from the person chosen by God.

Let us just think about these few things before we move on and shall we say a little prayer

Lord help me to accept this spiritual lesson for your sake,  
to bow to Your will. Destitute, I await the return of Your favour even  
if I have to wait until You reveal Yourself to me.

Help me to remember:

**"I have not promised to make you happy in this life."**

Give me strength, Lord, so I can go on.

Amen.

A song of hope & Comfort Written by Dan Schutte

Holy Darkness

Holy Darkness, blessed night, heaven's answer hidden from our sight.

As we await you, God of silence, we embrace your holy night.

I have tried you in the fires of affliction;

I have taught your soul to grieve.

In the barren soil of your loneliness there I will plant my seed.

In the deepest hour of your darkness I will give you wealth untold.

When the silence stills your spirit, will my riches fill your soul?

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