

Homily 29B - Suffering

The Lord has been pleased to crush him with suffering

Suffering is part of our lives. We cannot avoid it, try as we will.

Nor can we understand why it happens.

We know there are some reasons for it –

human malice, selfishness and greed, ignorance and carelessness, insensitivity;

Our freedom to act as we will – no matter what the consequences for ourselves or others.

Some suffering comes quite by accident –

it is the result of a coincidence, or of natural forces beyond our control.

But these reasons do not answer the question ‘why?’

Why to me, why now, why to the innocent?

There is no adequate response our minds can provide.

But there is a response our hearts can give. It is the response of trust.

Trust that no matter what we go through all shall be well.

Trust that God is present in our darkness and our pain.

Trust that our suffering is a means of coming closer to others, and to God.

Trust that our suffering can be redemptive for ourselves, and for others.

Though it seems for our ill, it can be for our good.

Why should we have such trust? Because of Jesus.

In Jesus we see one who suffered, but was not overcome by it.

His suffering was bodily, and it was of the mind – and heart, and soul.

He was betrayed, he was abandoned, forsaken.

His faith in the love and good purposes of God was put to the test.

And Jesus faith was triumphant.

In such trust he was victorious – over death and sin.

His soul's anguish over he shall see the light and be content.

Today we pray for a share in the Faith of the Master.

We will surely suffer, not least for being one of his followers.

But our pains can be a sacrifice offered for the sake of the world,

For those in any kind of need, near and far.

Such trusting faith will calm us in our distress, and give comfort to those who suffer because we suffer.

Such confidence will be redemptive, setting us - and others - free from sin and from dismay.

Our belief is that if we share in Christ's sufferings we shall share in his Resurrection.

Lord I believe, strengthen my belief.

At each Mass we have the opportunity to receive Holy Communion under both kinds.

We eat the bread of the Eucharist, we can drink from the chalice of salvation.

To accept the cup, is to express our willingness to participate in the sufferings of our Divine Master.

Can you drink the cup that I will drink? Yes, Lord, we can.

To do this is an act of faith.

When we receive from the chalice we expressing in motion what we hold in our hearts.

It is a deep and a brave prayer – it is a demonstration of our trust

All shall be well.

Let us make it often.