

# THE APOSTOLATE OF SUFFERING

*By*

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# The Apostolate of Suffering

## FOR E W O R D

POPULAR demand from readers all over America prompted the publication in book form of this series of articles on The Apostolate of Suffering, which first appeared in the pages of *The Apostle*. The book is presented to the public with the sincere conviction that it answers a universal question of the human heart in these sad times when war and the havoc wrought by war have caused so much doubt and despair. From the beginning, these articles were extremely well-received and before long, readers of *The Apostle* were writing to the editor for back copies of the magazine containing them. Later, the demand increased until the supply of back copies was completely exhausted. Yet the demand from every section of the United States kept constantly increasing. Publication of the articles in book form became imperative in order to satisfy these requests.

At the time when these articles on The Apostolate of Suffering were first written, I had just been appointed as Editor of *The Apostle*. My superiors directed me to do everything in my power to make the magazine worthy of its name. It was a challenge to which I responded by earnestly seeking and planning to the best of my ability. Knowing of the zeal of Father Eiten, I approached him with the request to help me materialize my task by contributing a series of articles to *The Apostle*.

Naturally it was our aim to make these articles as useful and timely and in keeping with the spirit of *The Apostle* as possible. The war was on. A whole world was bathed in blood and tears. Many hearts, bowed by grief, asked themselves why this unbearable cross had been placed upon the innocent. They could find no answer to

the riddle which has confronted sorrowing humanity from the dawn of time. Why must men suffer and die in the supreme sacrifice of war? And why must their loved ones grieve and pine? What is the answer, if any, to the cruel, senseless ordeal?

No theme could be more appropriate at such a time than one which could banish despair and bring solace to prostrate humanity. Mankind must be shown the value of those bitter sufferings and learn to turn them into blessing. The innocent sufferers must be made to understand that pain and distress, though originating from sin, are not necessarily a punishment for personal shortcomings. They must learn the great lesson and arrive at the wonderful discovery that theirs is a sacred calling and an exalted task whereby they are privileged to participate in the passion of the Divine Victim for the expiation of the sins of the world. They must, above all, be made deeply conscious that Christ continues to suffer in them and with them, that they are the members of His Mystical Body.

These considerations were decisive in making us select as our subject the Apostolate of Suffering. Accordingly, the articles by Father Eiten were published for twenty consecutive months and the response from so many readers in so many parts of the country convinced us that we had made the right choice.

To those who suffer in any way whatsoever, this book with its inspiring, consoling message will be like a *verbum Dei inspiratum*—like an inspired word of God. It will be balm for their wounds, relief in distress. It will be their good companion through the years, for no life, even the most sheltered and tranquil, is free from sorrow and loss. Each must bear his own share of tribulation on the journey through this vale of tears. Like a faithful friend, this volume will grow more precious through constant association.

To those souls who have loved God so dearly it will be an impetus to make this book's message a *verbum Dei*

*incarnatum*—an incarnate word of God—in the sense that they will live out the message as true members of Christ's Mystical Body, united with Him in the noble resolve to save souls through their own Calvary. Like God's blessed saints they will arrive at the profoundly consoling realization that no favors are to be compared to that of carrying the cross with Jesus Christ and that His love sweetens all the bitterness of grief.

To those innocent sufferers who grope in the darkness of doubt or stand on the brink of despair, it will be light from on high. Suffering is undoubtedly a source of great merit and happiness when the sufferer is animated by a supernatural motive. The noblest qualities of the soul are developed in the time of affliction. Our Lord Himself has told us: "He that taketh not up his cross and followeth Me is not worthy of Me." (Matt. x. 38) Within these pages the thinking man will find a new understanding of the fundamental teaching of Christian morality that suffering is the road to eternal happiness.

In conclusion, I wish to express my deep and lasting appreciation to the author of this helpful and much-needed work. I owe Father Eiten an immense debt of gratitude for his truly brotherly cooperation and for his scholarly yet popular presentation of the subject. I am grateful to him for his consent to the publication of these articles in book form, for I know that countless readers, not only in present sorrows but through the years that lie ahead, will bless his name. May the Divine Victim of Calvary Whose dying message to a world in tears Father Eiten so eloquently proclaims in this book, bless him and his apostolic labors abundantly. And may the knowledge of having brought comfort and inspiration to countless sufferers, and having gained for Christ many co-sufferers who keep watch with Him on Calvary throughout the centuries, be his richest reward.

ADELHARD M. FRANÇOIS, C.M.M.,  
*Editor, The Apostle.*

## INTRODUCTION

SUFFERING and the cross are hard for all of us. We pine under their weight. We are constantly forced to seek new and striking motives for bearing them. At one time perhaps the motive of self-preservation or 'keeping spiritually fit' made a strong appeal to us. Again we might have turned our eyes to the past and seen many personal sins. Right order demanded that these sins be expiated; hence the motive of expiation for our personal sins made us seek the cross of suffering.

"Or perhaps we have been moved by a very personal love of our Lord and, seeing Him racked with suffering and the cross, we also felt the desire for these things. We wanted to be just like Him. We realized that the law of love is the law of assimilation or likeness. Being professed lovers of our Lord, we wanted just what He had—the cross and suffering.

"No doubt other motives such as the fear of hell, the acquisition of self-control, the thought of eternal reward, at one time or another exerted a strong appeal on us. Yet sooner or later most likely all of these motives lost much of their appeal. They failed at times to stir us. We needed something else and something more.

"It is characteristic of Americans to want to *do* things. We like external activity, the apostolate of the active life, because it enables us to see things accomplished. This spirit often hampers our prayer-life and dulls our appreciation of suffering. This should not be. In fact, a true appreciation of the value of prayer and suffering should rather go hand in hand with our desire to do things and should furnish us with our most inspiring motive for embracing the apostolate of the cross. For, in the light of this true appreciation, we see prayer and suffering, not as

passive things, but as tremendous instruments for carrying on the great work of the Redemption.

"The Redemption as a motive for bearing the cross and suffering has only recently been duly stressed by ascetic writers, although it was known and practiced since apostolic times. Dogmatically it is closely associated with the doctrine of the Mystical Body; in fact so much so that with Raoul Plus we can say that 'the doctrine of the Mystical Body gives us the most convincing proof for the necessity of abnegation and renunciation in a truly Christian life.'<sup>1</sup>

"Psychologically, this motive has its foundation in a devoted and personal love. When one who is much attached to, and in love with another, sees that the beloved wants his cooperation in some major work, he is only too glad to do all he can by way of cooperation. He is thrilled at the idea and looks upon it as an opportunity. It is a real joy for him to help his loved one no matter how hard his lot of cooperation will be. He knows that the harder it is, the more his love will show itself.

"Now we all know that, according to the Divine Plan, Christ our Lord, Whom we love ardently, *wants* and *needs* our cooperation in the greatest of all works, the Redemption. Absolutely speaking, He did not need us, but in His Goodness He has arranged things so that now He actually needs our help. He would give us an opportunity to have a share in the great work of the Redemption. What can we do—professing to love Him as we do—but spontaneously and enthusiastically offer ourselves wholeheartedly to this sublime task of saving souls! The one thing we desire to know is how we can have a share in this great work, which He apparently accomplished long ago on Calvary."

This statement appeared in an article by the author in the *Review for Religious* (Sept. 1944, pp. 297-299).

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<sup>1</sup> Plus, *Progress in Divine Union*, p. 58.

The chapters following are intended to give a fuller explanation of this part of ours in the Redemption. At the suggestion of the Editor of *The Apostle*, in whose pages these chapters appeared as a series of articles, they are now offered in book form. Naturally in a work of this kind, the great theological and spiritual masters have been often consulted and sometimes followed very closely since it is difficult to improve on their statements.

I am very indebted to a confrère of mine who reading over the entire manuscript, suggested several changes and improvements. Thus the text here differs in some places from the original articles as they appeared in magazine form. One important change here is that I limit our part in Christ's Passion to that of sharing in the *subjective* Redemption *only*. To go beyond that seems dangerous to me *now*, or at least, involves difficulties which are very hard to explain.

A list of some of the books which have been consulted in the writing of these pages is appended after this book.



## CHAPTER I

### OUR PART IN CALVARY AND THE REDEMPTION

ONLY too often many of us think of an apostle in terms of a St. Paul and a St. Francis Xavier. We tend to limit apostolic work to missionary, priestly, or external labors. We too often forget that besides the external apostolate or the apostolate of action, there are two other very important apostolates, the apostolate of prayer and the apostolate of suffering.

The importance of prayer was clearly brought out when Pius XI named the Little Flower, a contemplative nun, a co-patroness of the missions with St. Francis Xavier. One distinct advantage that the apostolate of prayer has over the external apostolate is that there are no boundaries to its effects, whereas external works of zeal are necessarily limited. In a moment we can pray for the most remote pagans, but to evangelize them—that is sometimes quite a problem. Besides, the active apostles need our prayers both for themselves and the fruitfulness of their labors.

Over and above these two apostolates there yet is another apostolate, the apostolate of suffering. A great modern spiritual writer has said that “of the three apostolates, prayer, action, and suffering, the most efficacious is suffering.” It is with this latter apostolate that we are here especially concerned.

Suffering of one kind or another, be it sickness, battle-field wounds, long hours of work, rationing, want, mental trials, etc. is more or less our lot. It seems a shame that while there is so much suffering, so little of it is properly borne or made a part of what should be our apostolate of suffering. And still these sufferings are the most precious jewels if borne in the proper spirit. Why is this?

It is because besides keeping us spiritually fit, suffer-

ing can greatly contribute to the external apostolate: the salvation and further sanctification of souls. Suffering with Christ we can share in His Passion and apply its merits as did St. Paul who rejoiced in his suffering because he filled up in his flesh those things which were wanting of the sufferings of Christ for the Church (Col. 1, 24).

To be an associate with Christ, our great High Priest in His Passion—how can we ever forget this and the privileges which it unfolds, especially when we realize that Christ redeemed the world not so much by His external works of zeal and the active life, but by His Passion and Death! Christ's part was *to win* the prize of the Redemption, ours is *to help in apportioning that prize*. Christ has left in His Redemption His last will and testament. He has made us, as it were, partial administrators of that will.

Let us clarify this last point further by a simple example. Suppose a successful business man accumulated a huge fortune of cash which he stores away in a large bank for interest and safe-keeping. When he reaches the age of seventy he tells his sons that if they find any poor and needy persons, they may withdraw from his huge fortune at the bank the amount of money necessary to alleviate these unfortunate ones. In other words, he makes them partial administrators in the matter of distributing his money for worthy causes. They are only *partial* administrators because he himself has reserved to himself the right of making large gifts for charitable causes or being the *chief* administrator of his fortune.

Now Christ by His Passion and Death has merited an infinite amount of redemptive graces. He gives to us *a part* in helping to distribute those redemptive graces to ourselves and others by our good works, prayers, and sufferings. "Deep mystery this, subject of inexhaustible meditation: that the salvation of many depends on the prayers and voluntary penances which the members of the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ offer for this intention" (Encycl. of Pius XII on the *Mystical Body*).

After we have convinced ourselves of the intrinsic power of the cross for the saving and further sanctification of souls, there remains the matter of properly adjusting our lives according to that conviction.

In practice this adjustment will mean that we acquire the instinctive power of seeing in the hard things of life, ways and means to "fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ." (Col. 1, 24) These hard things, be they physical pains, sickness, bad weather, humiliations, disappointments, failures, losses, mental trials, or voluntary penances, we will look upon as our contribution in apportioning the merits of Christ's Passion. In view of the exalted end for which we are bearing our crosses and suffering, we will most likely experience a certain thrill or at least, satisfaction, first in bearing these crosses and sufferings, and secondly in offering them as our contribution to the Redemption.

How men experience a certain satisfaction, or at times even a certain thrill, in helping in a great cause one whom they admire! They are glad to make painful personal sacrifices. Ought we not experience a similar satisfaction and at times, even a thrill in helping our great High Priest in His eternal cause by our sufferings and crosses?

How often have we heard the importance of bearing the cross with Christ laden with His! Now we see that, besides making us like Him, the cross can further and complete His redemptive work. This consideration furnishes us with a strong, thrilling motive for bearing such hardships as getting up early in the morning, bearing the cold or the heat, doing humdrum jobs, starting the fire in a cold house, bearing the tortuous heat of a blast furnace, and a thousand and one other distasteful jobs which one or another has to do.

Humiliations, slights, failures—how we shunned and hated them, even though our Lord had told us to rejoice and be glad when they became our lot! Now, in the light of the apostolate of the cross, they are brilliant diamonds

buying precious graces for souls, either to bring them into the fold or to make them better therein.

Up to the present we may have taken for granted sense gratifications presented to us at every turn by our scientific age, such as a very elaborate menu, luxurious transportation facilities, fine lodgings, etc. Maybe we were out of sorts when they were not fully at hand. Now the Curé of Ars' unflinching program of rigorous conquest in these matters makes sense to us.

Thoughtful meditation makes us even more convinced of the need of seeking the cross, for when looking into the lives of *all* the saints, we see their uncompromising program of rigorous restraint in the matter of bodily comfort.

With such pressing motives constantly in mind, we can be so imbued with the folly of the cross that we become on fire with the love of the cross.

Further chapters will bring out in greater detail the grandeur of the apostolate of suffering so that we might present "our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing unto God" (Rom., 12, 1) and that we may "fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in our flesh, for His body, which is the Church" (Col. 1, 24).

## OUR PART IN THE BUILDING-UP OF THE CHURCH

**I**N THE last chapter on "Our Part in Calvary and the Redemption," we saw that we have been given the role of being partial administrators of Christ's redemptive merits. God in His goodness then, has made it possible for us to be secondary agents or to have a secondary role in man's salvation. We are privileged to become co-sufferers and in a certain very secondary sense co-redeemers with Christ.

We will now further develop this sublime idea of the apostolate of suffering more or less along the same lines, but with stress upon the importance it has in connection with the building-up or the growth and sanctification of the Church. Nobody better than St. Paul could give us the enthusiasm we need for this sublime apostolate and so his name will be again freely mentioned.

According to the gospel it is God's eternal and divine plan that not only Christ, our Lord, suffer and die for the Church, His mystical Body, but also that the apostles and apostolic men, Christ's ambassadors and co Helpers, suffer for the same Church and even in some cases die for it. All this our Lord foretold in many places of His Apostles as when He said: "And you shall be brought before governors, and before kings for my sake, for a testimony to them and the Gentiles" (Matt. 10, 18 ff.). Or again, when He predicted to Ananias of Paul's future sufferings "For I will show him how many things he must suffer for my name's sake" (Acts, 9, 16). Later on our Lord would show Paul how much the latter would have to suffer for the Church.

Paul, too, on his part, enthusiastically took up this mission or apostolate of suffering for afterwards he could

write: "I, Paul, am made a minister, who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh, for His body which is the Church" (Col. 1, 23-24). In other words, Paul in place of Christ, would suffer those things which God in His divine plan would have Paul bear for His mystical body, the Church. Indeed, Christ Himself might have wished to have borne single handed all those things which were necessary for the proper building-up of the church. Yet it was the Father's divine plan that His Son leave much for apostles to bear that by their various prolonged trials and sufferings they might build up His Church and gather for it.

As we have mentioned, suffering gladdens Paul's heart. He esteems it a privilege and grace because in this suffering he takes upon himself that part or share of the sufferings which Christ left for him to bear. It is all-important to remember that Paul bears these sufferings in Christ's place for the building or growth of the Mystical Body, the Church. Surely all this is a privilege and grace, yes a divine privilege and grace.

St. Paul says that he fills up what is wanting of Christ's suffering. Does this mean that Christ's sufferings are incomplete and insufficient? Far from it, for they are not only sufficient, but superabundant. Something, however, is deficient on the part of Paul and this consists of those sufferings which Christ Himself left for Paul as His substitute to bear for His Mystical Body. It is not strange that Paul should be thrilled with this fortunate assignment because to repeat again, He as Christ's substitute is suffering for love of Christ for the Mystical Body of Christ.

And what the suffering Paul said of himself, each one of us faithful can and should now say: "I am thrilled in my sufferings which are for the good and building-up of the whole Church and I endure and complete in my flesh my share of those sufferings which have been allotted to be borne by the Mystical Body."

These sufferings have been allotted to us since, according to God's divine plan, the redemptive process is to be in some way administered, and thus completed by us, the members of the Mystical Christ. Thus if more and more souls are to share in the divine life of sanctifying grace, then it is necessary that more and more members of the Mystical Christ complete or fill up the measure of what is lacking in Christ's sufferings. And by this apostolate of suffering they will enable others either to enter this Mystical Incorporation or to grow in it. We Christians must realize that beyond our duty of becoming like to Christ and being united to Him, there remains for us the task of bringing Christ to as many others as possible. This is our part or share in the building-up of the Mystical Body, the Church. While Christ by His sufferings has won for us infinite redemptive merits, nevertheless we must never forget that certain of these merits will never be applied if the members of His body do not by their sufferings merit their application for themselves and others. Thus it is possible, as one great modern spiritual writer says, that "without my intervention souls will be deprived of the measure of redemptive grace which would have assured their sanctification or final perseverance." Hence we, as it were, in some sense have been chosen administrators of Christ's infinite redemptive merits. By our sufferings we can administer or apply His merits to souls either for their incorporation into the church or for their growth in sanctity.

What a dignity and a privilege is ours in the apostolate of suffering, concerned as it is with the noblest of all works: the building-up or growth of the church in members and in sanctity!

## OUR PART AND UNION WITH CHRIST

THE last chapter, in outline fashion, traced "Our Part in the Building-up of the Church." Both in that chapter and in the previous one, statements were made which seemed, perhaps, too wonderful to be true. It would seem in order, then, to give the basic reasons for these startling statements. And while we are doing this no time will be lost, for though no progress in our topic might appear, still a deeper insight and appreciation will be given into the ultimate foundations and basic reasons of the apostolate of suffering. This task we hope to accomplish by showing "Our Part and Union with Christ."

In His touching discourse at the Last Supper, Christ told us that He is the vine and that we are the branches. Now we all know how closely a branch and the stock of a vine are united. They are one, each of them working together and helping the other. St. Paul further compares this marvellous union between Christ and ourselves to the union between the head and the members of the body. Thus we can conclude that we are in some wonderful way *one with Christ*, and *united with Him*. We might be called the extension or prolongation of Christ as the branch is the extension of a tree trunk. A tree shares with its branches its life-giving sap and its very life. So too, because of the union or solidarity between Christ and us, we can make our own His merits, His Blood, and all that goes with them.

But Christ has gone farther than this mere sharing of His merits with us, for He has not only wished to have us share in or be associated with the fruits of His super-abundant reparation offered to His Father, but He wished to have us as His *active associates, co-helpers*, and in some secondary way, as *co-redeemers* as we have already seen. You might well wonder how this is possible and an ex-

planation here will clarify some other startling remarks made in the previous chapters.

All this is possible through the gift of sanctifying grace whereby we share in God's Divine Nature and inner Life. Of course, this grace is a sharing in the first place of the grace of Christ, and through that of the life of God. Here we are not primarily concerned with its mode of production, but rather with consequences following that. This marvellous gift of sanctifying grace—giving us a God-like nature, makes us sons of God, for indeed, what is sonship except the passing on of a like nature to another, whom we call our son. And on the other hand, since God has called us His sons, we know that He must have passed on or given to us a nature that is in some way similar to His own and thus Godlike, for otherwise He could not call us His sons. Hence we have been raised to a divine state, to a veritable *deification* or Godlikeness so that in all truth we possess a sharing in God's own inner life. We may not be consciously aware of this wonderful inner life of grace within us, still by faith we know that we possess it if we are not in the state of mortal sin. And once we are raised to this new divine state and live this divine life, and note too that this new divine state especially unites us to Christ, as branches to their vine, naturally our actions and sufferings, if we do them and bear them in union with our Lord, will be raised to a divine level of efficiency. Are not the fruits of a branch also the fruits of the vine? Thus the sufferings of us, the branches, are also the sufferings of the Divine Vine if we are careful to bear them in union with His sufferings by an act of purity of intention.

And therefore, just as we can say when we possess sanctifying grace that we possess a Godlike or divine nature, so too we can say of our actions and sufferings: "these are *Christlike* or *divinelike* actions, these are *Christlike* or *Godlike* sufferings and ones endowed consequently with *Godlike efficacy and power*." What a supernatural and divine power, then, there is in our patient sufferings! And

what dignity! It is now not hard to understand St. Paul when he wrote: "But God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of Jesus Christ; by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world" (Gal. 6, 14).

But besides uniting us to Himself, the Head, Christ has effected between us and other men, our brothers of the Mystical Body, a solidarity and oneness similar to that existing between Himself and ourselves. And in effecting this union between us and our fellow-members of the Mystical Christ, He has made it possible for us to offer to Divine Justice an expiation proportionate to the offense involved by our sins and those of our brothers. You will note that this sheds much light on the classic text—now so often mentioned but one we must never tire of, for it is a great source of our inspiration: "I fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh, for His Body, which is the church" (Col. 1, 24).

Perhaps, all along we took it for granted that our part in the Redemption was one of *receiving* and not of *giving*. What has been said so far, has been aimed at bringing in full relief our *active part* in the great work of the Redemption and to show that we are not merely the redeemed, but that we are to be with Christ in some secondary way, *redeemers*. Nor should this seem strange to us, for in being united with Him in His person, we might well expect to be identified with Him in His *great work*, our Redemption.

Let me conclude with this striking passage of one of our great modern ascetic writers: "The Redemption is the work of Christ, the work of the Whole Christ. This truth ought to change our usual way of thinking. Most of us passively assume that Christ has done everything, that we are concerned with the Redemption only in so far as we have benefited by it. We are not even aware of the importance of our active duties: That *we are also Redeemers with a Definite work to carry out in the salvation of the world.*"

OUR PART IN THE TREASURY OF  
THE CHURCH

SURELY now-a-days people in general are very intent upon the gaining of indulgences. I wonder, however, whether they ever think about making their contribution to the treasury of the church by which these indulgences are made possible and from which the church gives them. In any case, it would seem proper to see the part that our sufferings play, by way of contribution, in the spiritual funds of the treasury of the church.

It is God's divine plan that the funds of this treasury be composed of not only the merits and satisfactions of Christ, our Head, but also of the apostles and of all the saints. Here obviously God has in mind to honor at the same time both His Son and the saints. He honors the latter by permitting them to work together with Christ in the great work of satisfaction. Thus their good works and sufferings are put in this great spiritual fund along with Christ's. In acting thus God acts after the fashion of a ruler who by a personal favor honors his loyal and outstanding citizens by making them ambassadors or heads of subjects countries, or by giving them some big executive job which has much to do with the governing of the country proper. In a word, God would honor us, His creatures, by permitting us to cooperate with His Son in this great work of satisfaction.

But besides this, God according to this explanation has something else in mind. He would have between all the members of the church, that is, between us and the saints, a perfect interchanging of goods and honors, just as we see to be the case among cooperative and loyal citizens of any country or among children of the same family. In any case, this divine plan should make much for perfect

fellowship, cooperation and harmony among us Christians, especially when we once become aware of it.

Of course, all that we have just said, is based first upon the dogma of the Communion of Saints, a dogma by which all the faithful under Christ, our Head, so form one Mystical Body, that the merits and satisfactions of Christ and the saints are in some way those of the faithful and thus they can be used for the advantage of each; and secondly upon the dogma of the Church's primacy over both its members and the good works and sufferings of this Mystical Body.

By this active cooperation, then, on the part of the saints—a cooperation, indeed, by which they join their contributions of good works and sufferings along with those of Christ's to the funds of the treasury of the church—we can really say that in some real sense they and we complete what is wanting in the divinely allotted merits of the sufferings of Christ, for without this active cooperation on the part of the saints in offering up their sufferings along with Christ's, the sufferings of our divine Lord would not fill up or reach the allotted quota of merits, which God in His divine plan would have this treasury of church reach or contain. All this is true because God desires that this allotted quota is to be reached only through a cooperative project—a cooperative project, indeed, which is made up of the sufferings and satisfactions of both Christ and the Saints.

Of course, this treasury is certainly complete as far as the sufferings, merits and satisfactions of Christ are concerned. But the point here to be remembered, is that it is still incomplete on the side of the saints in reaching their allotted quota of the sufferings, merits, and satisfactions to be offered. Thus in their regard and in ours, too, there is still a deficit; our quota has not been reached; we are still behind in our dues. It is of this deficit, of this quota to be reached, that St. Paul speaks also when he says that he completes it, that he fills it up by his sufferings.

I believe now that this explanation might change our attitude on the matter of indulgences. Before we were, perhaps, all intent upon gaining them and this was surely a good thing. Still, now, there should be ever before our eyes the glorious opportunity of doing our part by way of contribution to the treasury of the church, and of reaching our quota according to the divine plan in these contributions. A treasury or bank has a twofold purpose: 1) it is a place for depositing funds, and 2) it is a place for drawing funds. Don't be merely satisfied with receiving funds or indulgences from the bank of the church. Do your part also by the holiness of your lives in depositing funds of good works and sufferings to this treasury. This is just another aspect of the glorious apostolate of suffering, and by the way, surely a great contribution for all missionary endeavor.

Still to be an apostle here or to help fill up the treasury of the church, we must live lives of great sanctity for it is only after we have accumulated a superabundance of works of satisfaction—as the saints, indeed, did—that our works can be deposited in the treasury of the church. Therefore, only after both the guilt and the temporal punishment due to our sins have been remitted, can our works of satisfaction be applied to this great treasury. When we shall have reached this state of holiness, then with our Blessed Mother, St. John the Baptist, the Apostles, the Martyrs, and the other glorious saints, may we make, by reason of the Communion of Saints, our contributions to this precious treasury, where they will be, as it were, common funds, funds indeed, to be given out as indulgences.

What a motive for living a life of great holiness! What a wonderful apostolate of selflessness! What an excellent way to apply our sufferings and works of satisfaction, since by them Christ's sufferings and works of satisfaction can be applied to remit the temporal punishment due to sin in others!

THE PART OF FRIENDSHIP IN  
THIS APOSTOLATE

ALL along in the preceding chapters it has been implied and here and there mentioned that the apostolate of suffering is a grace and a privilege. It will not be amiss here to see in greater detail why this is true.

Our Lord's chief work here below was the work of the Redemption. While He was certainly able, as we all know well, to accomplish this great work without any contribution on our part, still because of His deep friendship and love towards us, He made it possible for us to be co-helpers and associates in this, His greatest work. The fact that He in no way needed us, brings out even in greater relief His friendship and love towards us.

How honored and privileged we would feel if the President of our country asked us to contribute our efforts to a project which was to be the outstanding contribution of his administration! And the honor and privilege here would seem to us even far greater if we knew that the President in no way needed our efforts, but merely did this as a good gesture, and as an act of deep friendship towards us.

How, indeed, men down the centuries have been fired with enthusiasm—even to making great sacrifices and giving up their very lives—to help great leaders in their projects, even when these projects at times were immoral! And still, of course, these leaders needed the cooperation of others.

What enthusiasm, then, ought we not bring to this great cooperative project of the Apostolate of Suffering, seeing that our Lord has so honored us by making us co-helpers with Him in the greatest work of the greatest of

all leaders, and in a work, too, in which we know He in no way needed us!

And, if on the one hand, our Lord has shown His deep friendship and love towards us by making it possible for us to work with Him in this greatest of all enterprises, is it not necessary on the other, that we show our appreciation for this singular act of His friendship by cooperating with Him? Are we not mindful that right here we can show our deep friendship, loyalty, and love towards Him? And, perhaps, there is no better way, since to undertake suffering for the sake of another, is usually the best proof of our friendship and love.

And now that our Lord out of His deep love of us depends, as it were, upon us to help and to cooperate with Him in this great Apostolate of Suffering, even to the extent that souls will be lost or not reach the sanctity they should, if we fail to cooperate properly—would it not be an utter lack of deep friendship on our part if we failed to show enthusiasm in this great apostolate of the cross? How dear souls are to the Lord! Still by ignoring this apostolate or by showing ourselves little cooperative in undertaking it, we certainly are ignoring things that are very dear to the Heart of Christ. In a word it would seem that we do not love Him very much. Let us, then, take up this grand Apostolate of Suffering, realizing on the one hand that our Lord has shown towards us the deepest friendship in making it possible for us to be co Helpers with Him in it, and on the other, that we are showing towards Him our deep friendship and love by taking it up.

It is helpful also to make this Apostolate of Suffering a very personal matter with our Lord, since this helps our enthusiasm and gives a personal touch to our intimate friendship. Thus we can ask our Lord at times to apply our sufferings and fruits of our Apostolate of Suffering to this or that soul, as for example: "Dear Lord, accept this suffering for the conversion of this soul or these souls." Or again: "Dear Lord, accept this cross that this soul or these

souls may grow in holiness." And surely our Lord too will be pleased with these little intimacies, for they indicate a personal touch in our love of Him, and they incidentally make us more loyal enthusiasts of this great apostolate.

We can, then, never afford to forget that our Lord from a very personal love of us has given us sanctifying grace, made us the sons of His Father, and thus incorporated us into His Mystical Body. So endowed and equipped, our sufferings have a Godlike and Christlike value if we bear them in union with Him as a branch in union with its vine, and with pure intention. The least we can do, to show our gratitude, friendship and love, would seem to be to take up with great enthusiasm this great Apostolate of Suffering, and thereby present to His Father Godlike and Christlike suffering, whereby the fruits of His Passion may be applied, either for the salvation, or for the growth in holiness of souls. Let this be our personal touch of friendship, our personal manifestation of intense love towards our Lord! And what a shame it would be if after being divinely implemented and equipped by our Lord with a divine and Christlike endowment, whereby we can be productive of works and sufferings with a divine and Christlike value, we should let this divine endowment of ours lie idle and dormant, especially when it can be so fruitful, and be such a happy manifestation too of our deep personal friendship and love of our Lord!

DISPOSITIONS FOR THIS APOSTOLATE  
 "ONE WITH JESUS OR IDENTIFICATION  
 WITH HIM"

EARLIER in this book our life of union with Jesus was developed in summary fashion. There we saw that when we are in the state of sanctifying grace, we are united to Christ as a branch is to its vine. This is Christ's own comparison. Still we can be united to Him by this wonderful union—a union which Christ further compares to the union of the three persons of the Blessed Trinity—and yet have our works and sufferings less productive of good because of a lack of ideal dispositions. It is thus very opportune here to investigate in some detail the dispositions which an apostle of suffering should ever have.

Supposing, of course, that a deep friendship and love of our Lord activates us in bearing our crosses—a matter discussed in the last chapter—it is now all important to give very definite direction to this friendship and love.

Any deep friendship and ardent love tends to united effort, oneness of mind and will, and a complete assimilation of self in the interests, activities, and especially in the person of the one who is loved. In view of this, then, we, the branches and members, must unite ourselves with our Lord, our suffering Vine and Head, by making His disposition *ours*, His intentions and desires *ours*, His interests *our* interests, and His way of life—the way of the cross and the way of the Apostolate of Suffering, *ours*. To have these dispositions of His, we must especially try to be actuated by His humility, His patience, and His burning love of God and men.

What else is all this if not a life of intimacy with Jesus? And as this intimacy gradually deepens it will surely bring about a life of union with Jesus, not only in

being united to Him by sanctifying grace, but also in having our works and sufferings, in some mysterious way, one with His. Thus united to His, our own actions and sufferings, as we saw before, have a Godlike and Christlike value. They are endowed consequently with a more Godlike and Christlike efficacy and power.

What further does this life of intimacy and union with our Lord imply? Being a life of love, it implies that we spontaneously put aside our own feelings to adopt the feelings of Christ, our Beloved, that He might live and act freely in our lives. Thus our life is taken up with His interests to the extent that we live for His sake and on behalf of Him. Nor should this be considered anything extraordinary since the life of a devoted wife and mother is often completely taken up with the interests of her husband and children in this earthly life below. This is to put on Christ, to be clothed with Christ Jesus (Gal. 3, 27), to reach the perfect age of Christ (Eph. 4, 13).

It implies further, that realizing we are the continuation and prolongation of Christ, we try to continue His life, His love and glorification of His Father. Christ longs to love His Father in the millions of souls about us, and this also to the end of time. Our ambition ought to be to have Jesus live in us, work in us, rejoice in us, be praised in us, and suffer in us. In a word, all our life must be a continuation of Jesus, of His prayer, His labors, His joys and sorrows, and especially His sufferings. If this is accomplished, we can say with St. Paul: "I live now, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Of course all this is now possible because we are branches of this Divine Vine and members of His Mystical Body. What the branch or member does, the Vine or Body does too.

Constant fidelity here will finally give us Christ's point of view. It will wrap us up in His interests until one day we find that He means everything to us; His interests are ours, His life is ours, for we are so taken up with Him that we have forgotten ourselves. Our heart is then the

Heart of Christ as the "heart of Paul was His." And of course this complete devotion to Him implies a perfect docility to the inspiration of grace, since they will inevitably direct us this way.

This life of intimacy and union with Christ is surely one in which "we fill up what is wanting" in His Passion, for it is a continuation of His life, and His life was surely one of suffering. His life surely was a life preeminently given to the Apostolate of Suffering. Ours, if a continuation of His, will share the same privilege and thus we will continue His work as the Saviour, Redeemer, and Repairer. This attitude, let us be sure, far from depressing us, will make us face the cross and sufferings enthusiastically and joyfully. Were not the saints the happiest of people?

True, this is a growing process. We cannot ordinarily expect to reach it at once. In the beginning we ought to try to unite ourselves with the suffering Christ by protesting to Him that we do everything in union with Him, and with the same intention and dispositions which were His. The following might be an example of our prayers as well as a summary of what we have just said:

"Dear Lord, our Divine Vine and Head, out of the depths of love for you, I, Your branch and a member of your Mystical Body, protest that I want all my works and sufferings to be as much yours as the actions of my hands are my actions. With the purest of intentions I offer them up to you. I desire too that my dispositions in all my works and sufferings be as far as possible the same as yours. From the depths of my heart I long that my life, my labors, my prayers, and especially my sufferings be a continuation of Your life, Your labors, Your prayers, and especially Your sufferings. I thank You that You have made this collaboration and cooperation on my part both possible and efficacious. May my all be Yours. Amen."

THE PART OF THE MASS IN THIS  
APOSTOLATE

ALL along in previous chapters an effort has been made to stress the fact that we are to be co-laborers and co-sufferers with Christ in sharing, in carrying on, and in completing His Passion. This fact is again strikingly brought out by our Holy Father, Pius XII, in his encyclical on the Mystical Body.

Still how will all this, so fine on paper, be carried out in our daily lives? How can we complete, in a concrete way, Christ's Passion in our daily lives? What will be an excellent way to make possible an engulfment or absorption of our sufferings, works, and merits in the great sacrifice of Calvary? The answer: The MASS!

We have already pointed to the vital need of living a life of union with Christ, or of being "One with Jesus," as the title of a well known book goes. Now, if there is a moment of our day in which this union or oneness with Jesus should be real and vital, it is at Mass. Through the Mass we communicate with Calvary. We must never forget that at the Mass there is one and the same Victim, the same who formerly offered Himself on the Cross, now offering Himself through the ministry of priests. There is one sole difference, the manner of offering (Council of Trent, Sess. xxii, c. 2). The Mass then is one and identical with Calvary. It is an offering of the Divine Victim Who was immolated for us on Calvary just as the Last Supper was an offering of the Divine Victim Who was to be immolated on the morrow. Thus, through the Mass we have a link with Calvary; we even have Calvary renewed with "one sole difference—the manner of offering."

And while it is true that this offering or oblation of the Mass is absolutely one and the same, yet in a certain

sense it day by day presents a new aspect. Now each successive day witnesses new sufferings and good works being accomplished. And so sufferings and good works that were until yesterday mere promises, today are actualities. Our trials, hardships, sufferings and good deeds, for which our Saviour on the cross expectantly prayed, are now realities. Might we not believe that our great High Priest while the Mass is being offered, experiences a thrill—to use human language—in presenting to his Father today as real what before had been only foreseen. What a thrill we experience when our promises and hopes come true! Hence, in a certain sense, at the offering of the Mass there is a contribution to the Passion on our part.

If we had been privileged to have witnessed Christ's Passion and Death, and had also realized then their significance, no doubt we would have united ourselves heart and soul both in His offering and sacrifice—both in offering our sufferings with His as well as in suffering as much as possible with Him. Still, this was not our fortunate lot, for on Calvary Christ was alone save for His Blessed Mother and a few loving souls. We were not there to witness that drama. But now at the Mass, the re-enactment of the Last Supper, a representation of Calvary, He is not alone. We witness it. We can be active with Him. Oh, the wonder of it all! Now at Mass He begins to take us with Him, to unite us with Him not only as co-victims but also to make us offerers with Him. Who, indeed, can ever dwell on this sublime privilege and yet remain cold to the sublime Apostolate of Suffering! And so our lives with their little virtues and sufferings, and those other things which make up our little passion, may be more closely united with His sacred life, His great virtues, and His sacred Passion.

To attend Mass—what a privilege, what an honor! How far we would have treading on foot if we could have witnessed and shared in Christ's Sacred Passion! But the Mass is the Passion; it is re-enactment and a re-presentation of it in an unbloody manner. And God in His infinite

Goodness has made it possible that while participating at it, we might offer *our part* of the Passion. Hence when at Mass, offer yourself, all the trials, sufferings, works, heart-aches, humiliations, and self-imposed acts of conquest of your daily life in union with Christ's Passion and as a part of the complete offering and sacrifice of Calvary. But make sure to live this offering not merely while at Mass but during the entire day. *Live the Mass* in your daily duties. Accomplish in your life what you promised in union with Christ at this sacrificial banquet. At the Mass identify your offering with His. Outside of the Mass live out this offering and identify your sufferings and life of victimhood with His. Some people seem to be very fervent while at Mass. But outside of Mass, they are quite the contrary. What a strange contrast! They surely are not living *their Mass*—their share in the Passion. What a shame, indeed, it would be, if having as we do the priceless privilege—but one unfortunately unsuspected by so many—of being victims with Christ at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, we, Christ's members, should forget about this life of Victimhood outside of the Mass?

A modern author has well expressed this living of the Mass in our daily lives in the following long but well worthwhile quotation: The Mass "has a sequel—*the Mass of our life*. We have offered ourselves to God; He has accepted our offering and taken possession of us through Christ. Christ now lives in us in order to shape our lives and through us to save the world for which He could die only once. Self-surrender of our selfishness; that must be the life of a Christian, if he means what he is made to do at Mass.

"The Mass has put us in the attitude of self-surrender. We have left the church; a new day is dawning before us, with the task of carrying our self-obliteration into effect. Here the difficulty begins. But the Mass has also filled us with the *spirit* of love and generosity, with an ardent zeal for the work of God and Christ. Our presence at Mass is sup-

posed to have been 'intelligent,' and thus it constitutes a public pledge of self-surrender to God. We may not think, speak, and act like others who have not shared in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

"*Live, then your Mass!* Make the whole day and your whole life, your work, your influence, every action, the expression of your self-surrender to God. Perform every action so that it can be offered to God. If during the day you meet with suffering, disappointment, unfair treatment, anything unpleasant: *do not grumble—that is your Mass!* It is your offering of the last Mass and your preparation for the next. If you find it difficult to be straight, honest, pure, charitable: remember your Mass: carry out your offering. If you are put to a work that is distasteful to you; or if an incurable disease put a stop to all work and ambition, and consecrates you a 'victim': do not let self-pity narrow your soul—repeat your offering. Whenever there is an opportunity to help your neighbor, to make him better and happier; or to help the Church, to spread the kingdom of Christ: don't shirk it, don't excuse yourself—it is your Mass. And when, finally, death comes and calls you to the Master you have served: make the offering of your life the last act of your Mass, the last great 'yes' to the will of God. Thus the whole Christian life is lived in the magnificent spirit of the Mass, in the spirit of giving, offering, self-surrender, selflessness—in union with Christ. In this sense it can be called a 'spiritual Mass'" (J. Putz, S. J., *My Mass*).

This life, then, of living the Mass is surely a life of union with Christ, our crucified Victim. It is to be "One with Jesus." It is to carry out and extend the spirit of the Mass into our entire day with the result that we carry out at every moment of our lives in a sublime way the sublime Apostolate of Suffering. The following prayer which might be recited daily, might help us to *live the Mass*.

"My crucified Saviour, today I offer all my good works, trials, sorrows, sufferings, humiliations, acts of mor-

tification, and especially myself and my all in union with Your Sacred Passion and as a part of Your complete Offering and Sacrifice on Calvary. Deign, further, to unite this offering of mine with all the sacrifices of the Mass that are continually being celebrated throughout the world. Help me also to live the Mass which implies a life of self-oblition, self-surrender, and immolation in all the details of my life. Thus one with You, united with You, I can trust some day not only to dwell with You in heaven but also to help others share this same lot. Amen."

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE PART OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST IN THIS APOSTOLATE

**I**N PREVIOUS chapters it has been shown that our actions and sufferings have something of a divine and Christ-like value because of the divine life which we have in sanctifying grace, and because of our very intimate union with Christ in His Mystical Body. Proceeding from a divinelike principle, our actions and sufferings naturally have a divinelike worth. And since we are united to Christ as a branch to its vine, our actions and sufferings are His, and thus they are Christlike just as the fruit of the branch is the fruit of the vine.

Anything, then, that will develop or intensify our divine life of grace as well as our union with Christ, ought surely to be considered as most important in furthering our appreciation, our efficiency, and our practice of the Apostolate of Suffering. The last chapter on "The Part of the Mass in the Apostolate of Suffering," touching the latter of these two points, brought into a relief a very practical means of living this life of identification with Jesus. Yet Sacramental Communion, the complement of the Sacrifice of the Mass, is for us the most important means of remaining united to our Lord. Furthermore, as we shall see in more detail, the Eucharist ordinarily makes possible this continual union because, being instituted under form of bread, its first purpose is to maintain the divine life within us, and secondly, that having received this divine life from Christ, we might remain united and "one with Him." Thus the Holy Eucharist stands out, for its chief purpose is to accomplish this double end of intensification of our divine life and union with Christ.

Christ has called Himself in the Eucharist "the Bread

of Life." "This is the bread which cometh down from heaven; that if any man eat of it, he may not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven." (John 6, 50-51) Our Lord brings out clearly that the Eucharist is the staff of our spiritual life in the following: "Amen, amen I say unto you: Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life" (John, 6, 54-55).

In fact, our Lord does not hesitate to make the following bold comparison: "As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me" (John 6, 58). Now we know that the Son is "God of God, true God of true God" (Nicene Creed), and possesses the same Divine Nature as the Father. Of all the unions in the universe there is none which compares to this divine union of the Persons of the Trinity. Where One Divine Person is, there are the Others also. All three share everything alike and possess the entire Godhead in common. And still, our Lord dares to tell us that, as the Son "lives by the Father," so he that eateth Him, his Eucharistic Lord, shall live by Him. In other words, as through all eternity the Father is giving the whole of His divine nature to the Son, so the devout communicant shall live by Him, living, indeed, a life whereby he is made a "partaker of the Divine Nature" (II Pet., 1, 4). It is if He said to us personally: "My desire is to communicate My Divine life to you. I hold My being, My life, all, from my Father, and because I hold all from Him, I live only for Him; I desire with an intense desire that you, likewise, holding all from Me, live only for Me. Your corporal life is sustained and developed by food; I will to be the food of your soul, so as to preserve and develop its life which is Myself. He that eateth Me, lives My life; I possess the fulness of grace. The Father has life in Himself, but He has given to the Son also to have life in Himself. I give you life because I

give Myself as food" (Marmion, Christ, the Life of the Soul, pp. 260-261). Thus living by Christ, we have His life, we share in His own Divine life. What a privilege, what a dignity, what a quest!

Thus ordinarily without the Holy Eucharist, our Divine Nourishment, there is no development in our supernatural and divine life. It preserves us from spiritual death. Presently we shall see the intimate connection between this preservation and growth of our divine life and our union or unity with Christ in His mystical Body.

And now what does the Eucharist do to the incorporated members of the Mystical Body? Again it both preserves and intensifies their incorporation in Christ and, furthermore, without this Eucharistic nourishment there is normally no way of remaining incorporated in Christ. Did not our Lord say: "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in Me, and I in him. Except you eat the Flesh of the Son of man, and drink His Blood, you shall not have life in you" (John, 6, 57, 54). Thus through the Eucharist Christ abides *in us*, and we *in Him*. We learn the meaning of this word *abide*, from its usage elsewhere in St. John's gospel. St. John who is very fond of this word *abide*, says that the Father *abides* in the Son, and the Son in the Father. Here of course it is a question of that ineffable unity of the Blessed Trinity, of the perfect unity whereby the Persons of the Blessed Trinity are interior and within one another. In fact we might say here that St. John practically restricts himself in using the word *abide* to the idea of *perfect union*.

Still as the Divine Persons dwell in One another, so we too in some similar way *dwell in Christ and He in us*. It is here a marvelous *inwardness or indwelling* of Christ in us and of us in Christ. Food, when we partake of it, becomes interior to us. Likewise, by reception of this Eucharistic Nourishment, Christ becomes interior to us, and we become *interior* or part of Him. There is, however, a difference between our reception of the Eucharistic Christ

and ordinary food. By assimilation food becomes part and parcel of our substance. But when we receive our Eucharistic Lord, He rather assimilates and incorporates us. Why this strange inversion? It is because of a general principle that "the stronger dominates the weaker and assimilates it." And so while to external appearances we assimilate Christ, yet in all truth we are rather assimilated by Him to become more identified with him. Observe these striking words of St. Augustine: "I am the food of the strong; have faith and eat Me. But thou wilt not change Me into thyself, it is thou who wilt be transformed into Me" (Confessions bk. 7, ch. 4). Is it strange then that St. Paul wrote: "I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2, 20).

We see, then, the importance of each reception of Holy Communion since each reception makes it possible for us to enter more deeply into our Lord, and become more active and important members of His Mystical Body. Besides, frequent reception of the Eucharist ensures a progressive growth in Christ, both in the Christlike life and in Christlike activity.

After our Lord had instituted the Blessed Sacrament, and given it to His Apostles, what does He say to them in whom He had just come to dwell for the first time?

"I am the true vine; and My Father is the husbandman. Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit, He will take away; and every one that beareth fruit, he will purge it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you the branches: he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit, for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone abide not in Me, he shall be cast forth as a branch and shall wither" (John 15, 1-6).

The unity of inwardness that exists between a branch and its vine, is that of an organism whereby all the parts of the organism are joined together, and in turn received the

life of the whole. Thus now in Christ, the Divine Vine, the faithful abide.

They are in Christ, and the Christlife is in them. There is in some mysterious way an identification—a mystical identification—between Him and them. It is, besides, a union of activity, for in this Divine Vine they will enjoy and share in a really divine activity. This comparison of Christ brings out three things: 1) As the trunk and the branches of the Vine are one, we also with Christ are one. 2) As the branches live by the vine's life, so we too live by the vine's life, so we too live by Christ's life of grace since His Divine Life flows into us to vivify us divinely. 3) As the fruit of the branch is also the fruit of the vine, so too our works and sufferings are His, since "the branch cannot bear fruit unless it abideth in the vine."

Abiding in Christ, then, we further share by grace in His Divine Sonship and thus, though differently, we are children of His Father with Him. This abiding in Christ implies besides that we are identified with Him in all that concerns our intelligence, our will, and our activity. Thus, on the part of our intelligence, there is complete submission in matters of faith, and, on the part of our will, an insatiable longing to carry out His least desires and interests. Abiding in us, Christ, by His grace and the action of His spirit, is the principle of all our inner activity. He actually works in our soul.

Our Lord in the following words brings out clearly the intimate connection between the Eucharistic reception of Him and our preservation and growth in the divine life as well as our union or unity with Him in the Mystical Body: "He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me, and I in him" (John, 6, 57). True, by baptism we are engrafted unto Christ, and made members of His Body. Yet if this union is to be preserved and intensified, it must ordinarily receive all this from the Eucharist, which besides initiating our incorporation in Baptism, properly consummates and completes our incorporation in

Christ. Would not a newly born infant starve if not fed? So, too, the new members of Christ's Mystical Body with so many agents of spiritual ruin and death about them, would in God's ordinary Providence quickly famish if they were not properly sustained by this Divine Eucharistic Nourishment—the Bread and Staff of our spiritual life. All this surely must seem reasonable. Is not the Eucharist a food? And would not one expect the assimilation of this food to bring about incorporation? The bread, vegetables, and different foods we eat become ourselves and form complete union with us. They become a very part of our body. Likewise in some similar manner with Christ, Whom we partake of, we form one body.

In brief, then, and by the way of summary, our incorporation in Christ through the Eucharist is a union or bond whereby we are not only united to Christ's Divinity, but also spiritually to His Humanity, and this, too, permanently as a lasting effect of Eucharistic reception and its physical transient presence. We are united *to*, we are united *with*, we are united *in* the incarnate human nature of Christ as to a vivifying influence and life principle through which the divine life of His Divinity passes into us. "It consists of a mutual indwelling of Christ in us and of us in Christ. It consists in the consequent building-up of that one integral and living body wherein we dwell. Sacramental Communion binds us, through spiritual communion, to the immolated flesh of Christ, to the sanctified and sanctifying Victim, distributed to us that It may impart to us the life it draws from the bosom of divine glory. His flesh, the flesh of the Son of Man, is the link between our souls and His Soul, for the purpose of making us partakers, beyond His Soul itself, of the Divine Nature" (de la Taille, The Mystery of Faith, An Outline, see pp. 25-28).

What grand and urgent motives, then, we have for frequent and fervent Communion—realizing as we should that this is the great means of intensifying our divine life

of grace, and our union with Christ in the Mystical Body! And we too are well aware of the importance of a highly developed grace-life as well as a highly intensified union with Christ, since these *Godlike* and *Christlike* principles are so important in making our actions and sufferings divinelike and Christlike, as it is from them as from a source that the latter spring forth.

## CHAPTER IX

### POPE PIUS XII AND THE APOSTOLATE OF SUFFERING

ON JUNE 29, 1943, our Holy Father, Pope Pius XII issued an encyclical letter on the Mystical Body of Christ. Since parts of that encyclical are devoted to an explanation of suffering and its value, it seems very opportune to give here the substance of our Holy Father's remarks on this subject. This we will endeavor to do, weaving as many quotations as possible from the text into what follows:

We surely have been very much edified by our Holy Father's personal love of the cross. This he has shown by his very ascetic life of hard work, simple living, frugal diet, prayerfulness, self-denial, and complete devotion to His flock. We will now see him, an apostle of the cross, authoritatively teaching what he has long been living.

In the beginning of the encyclical, our Holy Father recalls once again the fact that riches hidden in the Church have been purchased by the blood of our Redeemer and that, far from being ashamed, we, His members, should rather glory in our thorn-crowned Head. This, he says, is a "striking proof . . . that the greatest glory and exaltation are born only of suffering and hence that we should rejoice if we partake of the sufferings of Christ, that, when His glory shall be revealed, we may also be glad with exceeding joy." Indeed, it takes much faith to believe and realize that suffering is a great boon, perhaps our greatest boon, for besides rather instinctively shunning it, we see all around us every effort being made to wipe suffering out of our lives. One modern sect that calls itself Christian attracts followers by promising to avert all suffering. Still all these efforts have been largely in vain. Today, it is true, we possess a marvelous scientific apparatus to

lighten our burdens. Yet because of a lack of moral uprightness, this very scientific apparatus is being used to bring about our misery and even destruction in this great present catastrophe.

It is well for us to realize the cause of Christ's exaltation and prestige of name was His very life of self-denial, His bitter Passion, and Death. Note these striking words of St. Paul: "[Christ] who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of man, and in habit found as a man. He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross. For which cause God also hath exalted Him, and hath given Him a name which is above all names: that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow of these that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father." (Phil. 2, 6-11) It is not surprising, then, that St. Paul in the verse before the present passage bids us to "let this mind be in you, which was in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2, 5). It will take a lot of prayerful thinking to get this attitude, for this is the folly of the cross. Still in the last analysis we know it is the true wisdom. Let us pray that God gives us this wisdom which the world fails to appreciate.

No doubt if we are to carry out this program of shouldering the cross we need strong motives to help us when the going becomes hard. Our Holy Father very convincingly does this very task for us. "Dying on the cross," he writes in the encyclical, "[Christ] . . . left to His Church the immense treasury of the Redemption; towards this, she contributed nothing. But, when those graces come to be distributed, not only does He share this task of sanctification with His Church, but He wants it in a way to be due to her action. Deep mystery this, subject of inexhaustible meditation: That the salvation of many depends on the prayers and voluntary penances which members of the

Mystical Body of Jesus offer for this intention and on the assistance of pastors of souls and of the faithful, especially of fathers and mothers of families, which they must offer to Our Divine Savior as if they were His associates."

Our part in the Passion, then, is not one which is to make up a real deficiency found in the very Passion itself. That would imply that Christ's part was defective whereas we clearly know that His redemptive contribution was infinite and superabundant.

Our part in the Passion consists in applying the merits of it, either for the conversion of souls, or for the further sanctification of those of the fold. This part we accomplish by our sufferings, our acts of self-denial, our mental trials, and humiliations; in a word, by our apostolate of the cross. Thus while Christ's sufferings won the prize of the Redemption, ours share in applying or administering that prize of His infinite merits either for converting souls or making souls of the Church better. In some real way, the complete Passion of Christ, the complete Sacrifice of Christ is Christ's suffering plus ours—His, indeed, to win the prize, ours to help in apportioning it out. And so, as our Holy Father points out, we become as it were associates and co-helpers with Christ in the great work of the Redemption. Note how he especially singles out the important role fathers and mothers have in this great and inspiring task.

This whole matter on our part in the Redemption is further clarified by this following passage from the encyclical for, besides explaining part of the doctrinal side of it, the passage shows us how to carry it out in our daily lives: "Although our Savior's cruel Passion and death merited for His Church an infinite treasury of graces, God's inscrutable providence has decreed that these abundant graces should not be granted us all at once; and the amount of grace to be given depends in no small part also on our good deeds. They draw to the souls of men this ready flow of heavenly gifts granted by God.

"These heavenly gifts will surely flow more abundantly if we not only pray fervently to God, especially by participating devoutly every day if possible in the Eucharistic Sacrifice, if we not only try to relieve the distress of the needy by works of Christian charity, but if we also set our hearts on eternal treasures rather than the passing things of this world: restrain this mortal body by voluntary mortification, denying it what is forbidden, forcing it to do what is hard and distasteful; and finally humbly accept, as from God's hands, the burdens and sorrows of this present life.

"Thus, according to the Apostle, 'we shall fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in our flesh, for His body, which is the Church.'

We should scarcely need any urging in this apostolate of the cross for we are working here with Christ, cooperating with Him, actively helping Him in His greatest work. We are working with One and helping One Who means far more to us than anyone or anything else. We are working alongside of our greatest and dearest friend in a project which means more to us than any project of this perishable world. Here, finally, we are working hand-in-hand with One Who loves us more than anyone else in this world and Whom we ought to love more than anyone else. If human love is stronger than death, what ought not divine love in our hearts for our Divine Beloved, the loving Christ, motivate us to do? What heroism ought it not stir up in us? What a love of the cross ought it not beget in our hearts when we realize that these latter are the very things that make up our contribution to the complete Passion of Christ?

Briefly, then, in the words of our Holy Father, "to us it has been granted to collaborate with Christ in this work of salvation 'from one and through one, saved and saving.' " Nor must we forget, to use again the Pope's words, that "in the (Mystical) Body thanks to the Communion of Saints, no good can be done, no virtue practiced by in-

dividual members without its contributing something also to the salvation of all." A solidarity, then, reigns not only between Christ and us, His members, but also among ourselves.

This collaboration on our part with Christ in the work of salvation is, of course, made possible by reason of our close union with Christ and because of our divine life of sanctifying grace. Here obviously, as we pointed out in the last chapter, "the Holy Eucharist, wherein this union during this mortal life reaches, as it were, a climax" (Ency. of Pius XII), plays an important part. "In this act of sacrifice," our Holy Father points out, "through the hands of the priest . . . the faithful themselves, with one desire and one prayer, offer it to the Eternal Father—the most acceptable victim of praise and propitiation for the Church's universal needs. And just as the Divine Redeemer, dying on the cross, offered Himself as Head of the whole human race to the Eternal Father, so, 'in this pure oblation,' He offers not only Himself as Head of the Church to the heavenly Father, but also in Himself His mystical members as well. He embraces them all, even the weak and ailing ones, in the tenderest love of His heart."

Let us, then, center our life around the Mass. Let us ask our High priest to offer up in each Mass not only ourselves but also all our sufferings, hardships, voluntary penances and, in a word, our entire apostolate of the cross. Live the Mass—let this be our motto and one which we carry out every moment by our lives of unreserved surrender, self-effacement, and complete oblation to God.

Perhaps, there are some who will say that this work of promoting the salvation of others is a work entrusted merely to priests and religious. Let them read these forceful words of the Pope: ". . . we desire that all who claim the Church as their mother should seriously consider that not only the sacred ministers and those who have consecrated themselves to God in the religious life, but the

other members as well of the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ have the obligation of working hard and constantly for the upbuilding and increase of this Body."

Our Holy Father, as we all know so well, has been much afflicted by the tragedies caused by the recent war. He cannot forget the nearly innumerable war victims whose sorrows and burdens he tries to make his own. Here in this encyclical he addresses them all personally in fatherly and touching words—words, indeed, which can very appropriately be made our concluding remarks.

"As we write these words, there passes before our eyes, alas, an almost endless throng of unfortunates for whom we mourn and weep—sick, poor, mutilated, widows, orphans, and many not infrequently languishing even unto death for their own bitter afflictions or those of their dear ones. From a father's heart, we appeal to all who from whatever cause are plunged into grief, to lift their eyes in confidence to heaven and to offer their sorrows to Him who will one day reward them abundantly.

"Let them remember that their sufferings are not vain, but will be to their great gain and that of the Church, if for this purpose they but take courage and bear them with patience. To make this intention more efficacious, the daily use of the offering made by the members of the Apostleship of Prayer will contribute very, very much, and we welcome this occasion to recommend that association highly, as one which is most pleasing to God.

"There never was a time, Venerable Brothers, when the salvation of souls did not impose on all the duty of associating their suffering with the torments of our Divine Redeemer. But today that duty is clearer than ever when a gigantic conflict has set the whole world on fire and leaves in its wake so much death, so much misery, so much sorrow. Today imposes with particular stress on everyone the duty to flee the vices and blandishments of the world, and to renounce the unrestrained pleasures of the body and that worldly frivolity and vanity, which contribute

nothing to the Christian formation of the soul, nothing toward heaven.

“Rather, let those words of our immortal predecessor, Leo the Great, be deeply engraved in our minds, that Baptism has made us flesh of the Crucified One; and that beautiful prayer of St. Ambrose: ‘Carry me, Christ, on the cross, which is salvation to the wanderers, sole rest for the wearied, wherein alone is life for those who die.’

“Before concluding, Venerable Brothers, we cannot but plead with all to love Holy Mother Church with a devoted and active love. Let us pray every day to the Eternal Father for her safety and for her happy and large increase. For this intention let us offer to Him our works and our sufferings if the salvation of the whole human family, bought by divine blood, is really dear to our hearts...”

FURTHER DISPOSITIONS FOR THIS  
APOSTOLATE

EARLIER chapters have pointed out certain helps for forming a true apostle of the cross. Stress especially has been placed upon the divinely instituted helps: the Mass and the Holy Eucharist. Still, these divinely instituted helps, powerful as they really are, will accomplish little unless we properly dispose ourselves. How few receive from the great life-streams of grace which the Mass and the Holy Eucharist provide, those copious draughts of divine life because their flow is impeded by the barriers of our less perfect dispositions! We cannot too often ponder Cardinal Billot's striking words on the importance of proper dispositions in receiving the Holy Eucharist: "The Blessed Eucharist is the chief means that God has ordained for imparting the divine life to the soul. That outpouring of divine life is proportioned to the dispositions of the soul that receives it. The more perfectly the soul has entered into the dispositions of Jesus, the more closely it has become akin to Him in taste and outlook, the more abundant is the reception of the divine life that in its plentitude resides in Jesus" (*De Ecclesiae Sacramentis*, vol. 1, p. 94, ed. 5th). From the Council of Trent also we can conclude that amount of sanctifying grace received in the sacraments is proportioned to our actual dispositions and our cooperation with His grace.

This, indeed, is not intended to scare anyone from attending Mass and receiving Holy Communion, but rather its purpose is to key us up so that we will receive, at least, more of the great treasures of grace which these divinely instituted means of grace contain. It is a question, then, of keeping alive those dispositions in our hearts

which will help us to attend Mass and to receive Holy Communion with the greatest profit.

Passing up for the present a very important disposition—an intensive prayer life, since a special chapter will be devoted to this subject—with Père Lyonnard, the author of the classic work on the Apostolate of Suffering, we single out the following helpful dispositions which with his aid we will develop: 1) a spirit of faith; 2) a spirit of humility; 3) a spirit of patience and of conformity to God's Holy Will; 4) a spirit of love; and 5) a spirit of zeal.

The importance of a deep faith is at once evident. All along we have been asked to accept things which we could not prove by human reason. We had to accept these on faith. Thus to be true apostles of the cross we must believe firmly in the infinite redemptive value of the sacrifice of Calvary, as well as its perpetual continuation not only in the unbloody sacrifice of the Mass, but also in a bloody manner, as it were, in the holy living members of Christ's Mystical Body. Besides, we need a firm conviction that our sufferings and crosses, if they are united with those of our Head, Christ our Lord, can contribute not only to our own salvation, but to that of others as well. The measure of the contribution here depends largely on the intensity of our union with Christ through love and suffering. To be an associate with Christ in His redemptive work is surely a great privilege. It will, however, take great faith to realize this privilege and thus act accordingly. Here we need not so much knowledge of the supernatural, but a supernatural knowledge.

There is, however, a danger lurking in the Apostolate of Suffering if we are not careful. This apostolate offers us the privilege of being associates in Christ's redemptive work. It is just possible that pride may fill our hearts after looking back on our good deeds and sufferings. We need, then, a deep spirit of humility which will make us realize our complete nothingness and weakness. We must never forget these words of St. Paul: "What hast thou that thou

hast not received" (I Cor. 4, 7)? And again: "By the grace of God I am what I am" (I Cor. 15, 10). All the good, then, that we see in ourselves, we must see as coming from the hand of God. All the good, too, which we accomplish for others by our sufferings, good works, and crosses, we must realize, is due to His bountiful grace. God does not care for the offering of the proud. It is an ordinary matter for God to select a poor, humble, and unknown soul for some great work so that that soul might not attribute anything to itself. Witness this in St. Margaret Mary, St. Juliana, and Blessed Bernadette. In fact God told St. Margaret Mary that He had purposely chosen her as an instrument for the propagation of the Sacred Heart devotion so that she might not attribute anything to herself. Never must we forget that pride can vitiate all or at least much of the worth of our good works and sufferings. Why do so few reach the heights of divine love? Because so few completely forget themselves. Self-love, pride, vanity, self-complacency, and self-esteem, therefore, have no longer any place in our lives. With them we can never become true apostles of the cross.

The cross is hard. Human nature rather instinctively recoils from it. We need special aids if we are to embrace and love suffering. One obviously is the spirit of patience which will make us undergo the ordeals of this life with a certain poise, calm, and resignation. This patience is fortified by a true conformity to God's will. This latter makes us realize that suffering is and must be a part of God's plan in the running of our lives. Now whatever is a part of God's plan should be attractive and, at least, borne with resignation. I love God, my Lover Divine. I love too His Will in my regard, be it easy or hard.

Another motive which will fortify our patience, is our faith about which we have just spoken. This faith makes us realize that suffering helps to wipe out of us the anti-divine, that it divinely energizes us, that it helps us to have a subordinate role in Christ's Passion. Patience making

us complete masters of ourselves leads us to the way of utter self-denial and self-effacement. It makes us another Christ crucified, another savior.

Still our spirit of patience is likely to give out unless it is motivated by love. Love conquers all things and is masterful in its generosity. Love makes our destinies our own since love gives us the very power of God. It gives us the power of God because it gives us the Heart of God. Thus our deep love inclines the Heart of God to answer our desires, prayers, and sufferings. Love also helps us to have this conformity with God's Will since Love makes us wish only what God wishes. It is said that nothing is stronger than love. Surely nothing is stronger to win the Heart of God, for one who really loves God, will be tenderly loved in return. And since love consists in a mutual giving of the respective goods which two hearts have, just as the soul gives its all to Christ, so He in turn gives Himself entirely to it.

When a spirit of zeal is wanting, there is also little love, for there is no love without zeal. This is surely plausible. Indeed, how can one be said to love God, if he shows himself indifferent to the eternal salvation of souls which cost our Divine Redeemer so much? Our zeal is usually in proportion to our love. Love makes us resourceful in finding and using all the means which the Holy Spirit places in our hands for saving souls. One of these which yields to none in efficacy is the Apostolate of Suffering.

Still there is one disposition which in some respects stands out before the other dispositions since it is in some ways a condition and a prerequisite for proper functioning. This disposition is a life of sinlessness. It might also be called purity of heart or personal holiness. Right order surely demands that apostles of suffering cultivate this disposition for it would be a bit of folly to think first of paying off the debts of others before we have paid our own. It would seem strange and inconsistent, also, to find one

who although taken up with ideas of expiating the sins of others, had no qualms about committing sins in his own life.

It should be our ambition, then, to purify our souls from our past sins and to preserve them as far as possible from even slight faults. Here our Divine Model, Victim, and High Priest is our great inspiration. Indeed "it is fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners," (Heb., 7, 26) that when the going becomes hard, we might by looking at Him, be strengthened in our firm resolves to live lives of great personal holiness.

Ordinarily our Lord makes His choice of victim souls from the pure and holy. Still none are excluded. Let us not be discouraged, then, or think ourselves excluded from this apostolate if we have sinned gravely in the past. What grand apostles in this apostolate of suffering were not St. Peter, St. Paul, St. Mary Magdalene, and St. Augustine?

Christ, our Lord, was called the Lamb of God. At once we are reminded by this latter expression of His life of sinlessness and His life of Victimhood. Well might we try to be "lambs of God" by our lives of great purity of soul for if we are careful to avoid the defilement of sin in our lives, we can be sure that with any attention on our part we can readily become with Christ victims and true apostles of the cross.

## PRAYER AND SUFFERING

IT IS, no doubt, an experience common to many of us that our knowledge, esteem, love and embracing of the cross came through prayerful thinking and thoughtful prayer. Sometime or other in our lives the matter of the cross and suffering presented itself to us. It was no easy matter to handle. We most likely were tempted to avoid it altogether. Still prayerful thinking would not allow that, for it revealed to us the importance of the cross and suffering in our lives. It presented to us various motives for shouldering the cross. Then, too, at the same time we most likely felt God's grace urging and strengthening us in this holy endeavor. A beginning, then, had been made.

It is clear, therefore, that in the beginning prayer must initiate the Apostolate of Suffering since only by prayer do we realize the importance of suffering and the cross in our lives and it is only by prayer, too, that we loyally shoulder and carry out this apostolate. When a good beginning has been made, our prayer-life and our apostolate of suffering go hand-in-hand, grow together, and are only understandable when taken together. Briefly, one without the other is simply impossible. If one is prayerful, he must love the cross, and if one loves the cross, he must be prayerful.

There is nothing strange about this close connection between prayer and suffering. Did not prayer and suffering go hand in hand in the life of the Man-God? "What in reality are prayer and suffering of a Christian, a member of Jesus Christ, if not . . . the continuation and prolongation of the prayer and sufferings of Jesus Christ, His divine Head? But Jesus constantly prayed and constantly suffered; and His prayer and His sufferings were always

directed towards the end of the mission which He came to accomplish on earth, the salvation of the human race. Thus it is in Jesus Christ praying and suffering for the salvation of souls that the Christian, desirous on his part to cooperate in this work of prayer and suffering, ought to seek His power and His exemplar. The more he will approach this divine exemplar, that is to say, the more he will inseparably unite, as He did, prayer and suffering, the more he will be an apostle by the one and by the other, the more he will gain souls for Christ. This explains why the most apostolic men, who realized in the work of conversion the largest results, have all been men eminently filled with the spirit of prayer and sacrifice. St. Paul, St. Bernard, St. Francis Xavier, and among women, St. Teresa, not to mention a host of others, possessed this two-fold spirit in the highest degree. And it is precisely this that gave to their labors undertaken for God and for souls such a marvellous fecundity" (Lyonnard, *Apost. de la Souffrance*).

Earlier chapters have pointed out the extreme importance of the Mass and the Holy Eucharist for the apostle of the cross. These are the great means of becoming united to Him and being one with Him. These are the great means for giving added efficacy to our works, crosses, and sufferings and thus these latter ought to be offered to our Lord during the Eucharistic sacrifice. Still without a vigorous prayer-life it is practically impossible to share in those marvellous graces which the Mass and Eucharist contain. Most likely we receive graces while attending Mass and receiving the Holy Eucharist. But it is here a question of getting more from the Mass and the Eucharist and of tapping the latent treasures of graces which they contain.

What would we think of a person who would be satisfied to take away as a prize five hundred dollars for himself, when a little added effort would have made it possible for him to have secured several million dollars? Any per-

son who is careless about his prayer-life resembles this latter person. He receives some of the graces which the Mass and the Eucharist contain. An intensive prayer-life gives a salutary relish to our attendance at Mass and to our reception of Holy Communion. While it is true that prayer itself produces grace, yet with respect to the sacraments, it is only a disposition and an accelerating factor in their production of grace. Yet its importance in proper reception of the sacraments is so great that we can say that the supernatural graces received through the sacraments are largely dependent upon our prayer-life.

For our crosses and sufferings to be precious in the eyes of God, they must be done and offered up with a pure intention. Right here prayer assumes an important role since we make our acts of pure intention through prayer, be the latter definitely formulated or merely a prayer attitude or sigh. Prayer, being our life of love with God, naturally vitalizes these crosses and sufferings with the stamp of love. They become as it were, love-offerings to God. Prayer is the conscious life-bridge between God and us. It thus vivifies our works, crosses, and sufferings with our divine life of grace. Prayer elevates, supernaturalizes, and makes Godlike our sufferings and crosses. Prayer being the expression of our intention of pleasing God in all things, divinely directs our sufferings and crosses. It helps to make them united with the sufferings of Christ. It makes them something else than the sufferings of a brute beast, for it imparts to them a soul.

There is unquestionably a lot of suffering in the world today. But much of it is practically supernaturally worthless because it is not informed by prayer. How unfortunate this is! The suffering soul, moreover, really needs inspiration. It needs prayer that it might offer its sufferings to its Divine Lover.

Prayer, too, let us not forget, is helped by certain sufferings. Some sufferings make demands on our higher self, the self that seeks God. In the midst of these suffer-

ings we usually are more careful in the matter of praying properly. This is no doubt true because of our weaknesses and of the necessity of some external help.

Prayer and suffering, then, are closely related. Neither can properly achieve its end independently of the other. Prayer itself is a grand apostolate. The grand work of the Apostleship of Prayer which was only recently praised by our Holy Father, Pius XII, amply proves that. Still, we must never forget that the adjunct of sacrifice and the cross, in a word, the Apostolate of Suffering is no mere accessory or complimentary element of the apostolate of prayer, but a vital part of it and one which steps up the very life and efficiency of prayer. Let us never forget that while Christ's prayers and good works were capable of themselves alone to win our salvation, still they appear to be but steps subordinate to His sacrifice on the cross—His Passion and Death.

The ideal which we in any case should aim at, is to unite both prayer and the cross in our lives since a blending of both of them makes for the best efficiency of each of them. Thus let us pray, let us bear the cross, let us pray and bear the cross together. The following or similar prayer which might be said frequently, is suggested as a help to achieve this purpose.

"My crucified Savior, I offer up all my works, crosses and sufferings in union with Your sufferings upon the cross to Your Eternal Father for the salvation of souls. From the depths of my heart I long that my sufferings and crosses be as much Yours as the actions of my hands are my actions. You are the Vine, I the branch. Vivify the works, crosses, and sufferings of this Your branch, with your divine sap. The fruit of the branch is the fruit of the vine. Make my good works, and sufferings—the fruit of this branch, the fruit of You, the Divine Vine, so that united with Your works, crosses, and sufferings, they may have a Christlike and a divinelike worth. Amen."

## JOY IN SUFFERING

“I DEEPLY pity those who live for nothing higher than this world and its frivolities; they seem to me slaves. I should like to say to them: ‘Shake off the yoke that weighs you down. Why wear fetters that chain you to self and things less than self? The happy people in this world are those with enough self-contempt and self-forgetfulness to choose the cross for their lot. What blissful peace we enjoy when we place our joy in suffering!’ ” Thus wrote the saintly Carmelite sister, Elizabeth of the Trinity, who died as late as 1906 and who someday according to the opinion of a spiritual writer may “prove the peer of her saintly sister in religion,” the Little Flower. To many this statement will seem to be a contradiction, especially to those who make it a point to have as much worldly pleasure as possible. This too is not merely one passing statement or whim from this soul of great penetration and holiness, but something which from childhood on was a constant disposition of hers.

During her last mortal illness she wrote: “I am growing weaker, and I feel that it will not be long before the Divine Master comes to fetch me. I know and experience joys hitherto unknown to me. How sweet and soothing are the joys of suffering!” Later on she again wrote: “My happiness increases with my sufferings. If you only knew what sweetness there is at the bottom of the chalice prepared by our Father in heaven!”

After our Lord had spoken to His disciples about eating His Flesh and drinking His Blood, many of them said: “This saying is hard, and who can hear it” (John, 6, 61)? Perhaps we might feel the same about these statements of Sister Elizabeth of the Trinity. Still, whatever we may

think about them, they remain true. One must be imbued with the folly of the cross to appreciate the full significance of these statements. One must be on fire with a love of Christ Crucified to find joy in suffering. One must finally realize that suffering and the cross are a great means of "filling up that which is wanting in Christ's passion." Ardent lovers of Christ then, find joy in cooperating with Him, in being associated with Him in His work of the Redemption even though it entails suffering and the cross. But to do that one must be intoxicated with the love of God and receive special graces which we all ought to ask for.

Elizabeth of the Trinity's whole life was dominated by this burning love of God. It is not strange that she would long to be an associate with her Divine Lover in His work of Redemption. The following words of hers reveal her longings in this matter, "I rejoice in my sufferings . . . and fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ in my flesh. Yes, I am glad to take part in the work of the Redemption; I suffer, as it were, a continuation of the Passion—that I may know Him . . . and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable to His death. . . . I have never been so happy as since God deigned to let me share the pangs of the Divine Master. . . . You fear that I am destined to be a victim of suffering; I beg you not to grieve over what would be so beautiful a lot. I feel unworthy of it! Think what it would be to take part in the agony of my crucified Bridegroom; to go to my passion with Him, to share His work of Redemption!"

Centuries long before this St. Paul also manifested this love and longing for the cross. The enthusiasm which St. Paul had for sufferings and the cross verges on the miraculous. Frequently he mentions them in glowing terms. To quote a few of them here. "I now rejoice in my sufferings for you" (Col. 1, 24); "for as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so also by Christ doth our comfort abound" (II Cor. 1, 5). For Paul these are not his suffer-

ings alone, but they are Christ's sufferings, Christ's tribulations. Suffering, be it dangers, hardships, shipwrecks, fasting, persecutions, or whatever else, means to Paul a putting on of Christ "that the life also of Jesus (might) be made manifest in (his) mortal flesh" (II Cor. 4, 10), and that he might carry on the work of Jesus and complete His Passion.

Other saints as St. Margaret Mary, have had the same thirst for suffering. St. Margaret Mary considered all time lost that passed without suffering. This seems strange to us who so instinctively abhor every kind of pain or self-denial.

Some of the Saints, then, are great enthusiasts of the cross because they realize that their sufferings and crosses are a continuation, a participation, and a completion of Christ's sufferings. As members of the Mystical Body we are partners of Christ through suffering. Thus every sacrifice, every pain, each act of self-denial and renunciation become, as it were, a stigma of Christ or a mark and an identification tag whereby we are known as partners of our Crucified Master. We suffer in fellowship with Him. In bearing with Him this load of suffering, we, His members, consummate His sufferings.

Indeed, strange though it may seem, in spite of all their sufferings and crosses, the saints were the happiest of all people. It takes faith, perhaps, to be convinced of this. We might explain it by saying that the saints are the greatest and the truest lovers. Their love, however, is wholly directed towards their Lover Divine. They are living examples of one who loves God "with his whole heart, with his whole soul, with his whole mind, and with all his strength." Being, then, in love they share not only the sorrows of the one whom they love, but also the intense joys. Since their love is a sublime one, their joys too are proportionally sublimated.

To explain this last point further. When one is completely taken up with another person there is a certain

thrill and joy in doing things, no matter how hard they may be, for the latter. A loving mother finds great happiness in making great sacrifices for her children, while a devoted husband thinks nothing of enduring hardships for his beloved wife. Indeed, it has been well said that the true lover is masterful in self-giving. He gives the impression that he has been thrilled, even though he was forced to make a great sacrifice.

We see, then, that an ardent love of our Lord is the secret of maintaining joy in the midst of suffering. Love makes us largely oblivious of the difficulties and hardships involved, looks to the gift presented, and notes the joy which the gift gives to his beloved. Thus the real lovers of Christ experience a real thrill and joy in suffering for Him, in cooperating with Him. Let us, therefore, cultivate a burning love of God and try to find new and pressing motives for maintaining that love and growing in it. Of course, this is not the work of a day.

If we are still not convinced that there can be joy in the midst of suffering, then let us betake ourselves to the Holy Family. There certainly was much suffering in their lives. And yet the life of the Holy Family was a happy one. "We can't think of Our Blessed Lady and St. Joseph as being otherwise than happy, in the true sense of the word. We cannot look into their souls without seeing there unspeakable peace, deep contentment, tranquil happiness: God was with them" (Kearney, *Learn of Me*, p. 127). While sorrow and suffering occurred often in their lives, still these did not wipe out the joy of their lives, nor even prevent them from experiencing a deep joy in the midst of trials and crosses.

The teaching of our Lord is in complete harmony with every thing said so far. It will not be amiss for us to hear again the part of Christ's sermon on the Mount which lists the eight beatitudes.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the meek, for they shall pos-

sess the earth. Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for justice, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God. Blessed are they who suffer persecution for justice' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5, 3-10). And immediately after mentioning these eight beatitudes, our Lord very significantly adds: "Blessed are you when men reproach you, and persecute you, and, speaking falsely, say all manner of evil against you, for my sake. Rejoice, because your reward is great in Heaven; for so did they persecute the prophets who were before you" (Matt. 5, 3-12).

Christ's sermon on the Mount has been called "The Charter of the Kingdom of God," and "The Messianic Constitutions." Yet the part devoted to the beatitudes is in the very beginning of it, a fact which brings out their importance. The term blessed was an exclamatory way among the Jews of expressing felicity. Thus blessed here means: fortunate, happy, joyful or lucky.

Under what circumstances does Christ here tell us that we should consider ourselves fortunate, happy, and lucky? It is when we are "poor in spirit," or detached, humble, resigned, and modest. It is when we are "meek" or patient and greathearted and thus willing to yield up our rights for the love of God. It is when we "mourn" the presence of evil and hold ourselves aloof from the pleasure-seeking world by denying ourselves and taking up our crosses daily. It is when we "hunger and thirst for justice" or personal holiness. It is when "we are merciful," or animated by the spirit of almsgiving, forgiveness, tenderness, charity, and kindness. It is when we are "clean of heart," or sinless in our lives, and innocent and without guile. It is when we are "peacemakers," that is, promoters of peace by our clean, simple and charitable living. Finally, it is when we patiently "suffer persecution for justice"

sake" by permitting ourselves to be reviled, hated, insulted, reproached, and calumniated unjustly.

This, indeed, seems nearly an impossible program. Still our great Leader, Master, and Model, Christ our Lord, has gone before us and carried it out perfectly. Let us look at Him and draw inspiration and strength from Him. Let us frequently gaze at Him, lovely, lowly, and humble, the poor man who had not whereon to lay His head. And when we are tempted to be impatient let us learn from Him Who was "meek and humble of heart" (Matt. 11, 29). When sorrows strike us, let us not forget that these can purify and detach us, make us different men, and can bring out the best in us. Did not Christ having joy put before Him, empty himself and endure the cross? When others irritate us, let us recall to mind our Lord's wonderful kindness from the cave to the cross, be it to sinners, the poor, the sick, or the downtrodden.

Today, if ever, we need the atmosphere of the Prince of Peace around us. It is He Who offered refreshment and rest to the labored and burdened. On the night before He died He bequeathed His peace to His apostles and on the day of His death He made peace with His enemies who put Him to death: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do" (Luke, 23, 34). His first words to His apostles after His Resurrection were words of peace: "Peace be to you" (John, 20, 19, 21, 26). Let us, then, be messengers of peace who live in peace with ourselves and spread it abroad by fostering everywhere a spirit of unity, good fellowship, loyalty, justice, and charity.

Finally, if we are cast down by the meanness, the lack of understanding, the coldness, the reproaches, the lies, the slanders, or what ever it may be, of others, let us look once more to the meek Christ Who although Innocence Itself, bore patiently and without complaining false accusations, slanders, revilings, reproaches, and even the stigma of crucifixion, which was the most disgraceful of punishments. When we are in these straits, we might call to

mind that the law of love is the law of likeness. Now we are becoming like Christ, our Divine Beloved. A consequent joy should be our reaction.

Growth in the love of our Lord will increasingly make us eager to embrace the cross of suffering to be just like Him. We will experience a certain fondness in contemplating the various sorrowful mysteries of Christ's life. These mysteries, be they the crib, the menial labor of His hidden life, the work, fatigue, and humiliations of His public life, or finally His sorrowful Passion, will give us new courage in the midst of pain and sadness. They will warm our hearts with love. We will see, too, that if we suffer with Christ we shall be glorified with Him.

Finally, at times we might even experience joy and a thrill in the midst of our crosses and sufferings, for the realization has come to us that suffering with Christ means to comfort Him, to help Him in His Passion, and to love Him more perfectly. This disposition can lead us to the point where we actually and habitually desire and love suffering for the love of God and the sanctification of souls. Then with Christ we can say: "I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized. And how am I straitened until it be accomplished" (Luke, 12, 50).

Well might we beg our Lord that He fill us with some of the love of the cross as well as the consequent joy following this love, which animated St. Andrew, the apostle. When being led to his cross that he might be crucified, according to a story of tradition, St. Andrew cried out in ecstatic joy: "Hail, O Cross! Hail, O Cross, made sacred by the body of Christ. . . . I come to thee. Do thou receive me in joy and triumph. O Blessed Cross, for which I yearned so unceasingly, which I loved so ardently, it is from thee that I desire to be received by my Savior."

## MARY OUR MODEL APOSTLE OF SUFFERING

PERHAPS we have wondered more than once why Mary's life should be so full of sorrows and suffering in view of the fact that she above all others is God's fairest daughter, God's loved one? How could God permit her to bear so many sorrows and sufferings, especially the terrible martyrdom of going through the Passion with her Divine Son and of standing at the foot of the cross, if He so loves her?

To understand this we must understand her mission. By her mission she was to have a large share in the redemptive work of her Son. For this very reason, too, she was to have the full measure of His sufferings since God had willed that men were to be saved chiefly through the sufferings and humiliations of His Son. Christ's life was to be one long martyrdom. Mary's life too would share the same fate. Indeed a sword would pierce her soul as prophetic Simeon told her at the temple.

This long martyrdom cost Mary much. Merely to hear this, saddens us. Still "nothing could have made us understand better this truth, that those who wish to have a share in the work of saving souls and in expiating sin must carry their cross courageously and lovingly and then unite their sufferings with those of the Savior. For Mary Immaculate had no sins of her own to expiate; she suffered only because of the sins of men. We are the ones who sinned, and we are therefore the ones who should make a fitting reparation by carrying the cross which God sees fit to send us" (Tanquerey-Arand, *Doctrine and Devotion*, p. 297).

While, indeed, Mary by her suffering was to cooperate very intimately with her Divine Son in His redemptive work, still there is an essential difference between her

dolors and her Son's Passion. Her Son's Passion in God's Divine Plan was necessary for our salvation because God demanded a reparation which would in every way equal the offense committed. Only a Divine person could do this since serious sin has something of an infinite malice. Further, God decreed that our redemption be accomplished only by the bloody sacrifice of His Son on Golgotha.

Mary's role in the Redemption is quite different. True, she cooperated in her Son's redemptive work, yet her role was a subordinate and a secondary one. Still, we must not minimize too much this cooperation lest we fail to realize that she had a real share in our Redemption.

This share of hers in our Redemption was manifested at the very first moment of the Incarnation. Does not God through the Angel Gabriel wait, as it were, for Mary's fiat or consent before He makes the Word, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, Flesh? For only after that consent is obtained from Mary does He send into this world His Son Who would take from her the Flesh and the Blood that were to be immolated later on the cross for our salvation.

Here at this moment of the Incarnation, we have a double acceptance, Mary's and Christ's. Mary consents to be the Mother of God, our Redeemer, while Christ makes His first and complete act of oblation and perfect surrender to His Father in the following: "Sacrifice and oblation thou wouldest not, but a body Thou has fitted for Me. Holocausts for sin did not please Thee. Then said I: Behold I come; in the head of the book it is written of me that I should do Thy will, Oh God" (Heb., 10, 5-7).

By this double acceptance, then, Christ is made our Redeemer, and His co-worker, His Virgin Mother, merited the name "Co-redemptrix," the glorious title given to her by recent popes. Here at the very dawn of the Incarnation Mary's life of victimhood begins, a fact of which shortly later holy Simeon will remind her when he says:

"And thy own soul a sword shall pierce, that out of many hearts, thoughts may be revealed" (Luke, 2, 35).

Mary's part in the Redemption is both much greater and much different than ours. Her part is much greater than ours because her good deeds were in greater abundance and of greater perfection and intensity. Further they were in accordance with her eminent sanctity, her dignity and her mission. Her part too is much different than ours because we can only apply the fruits of the Redemption according to the measure of our merits, whereas over and beyond this, her part was also to give us both the Incarnation and the Redemption by her fiat.

Pope Benedict declares that we are entirely justified in saying that Mary acted in concert with Christ in redeeming the human race (Bernard, Vie spirituelle, Dec. 1930). And Pope Pius X declared that Mary was "summoned by Christ to the work of man's salvation in such wise, that she merited congruously what Christ merited for us condignly" (Ency. Ad diem illum, Feb. 1904)—which is the theological way of saying that Mary's eminent qualities and exceptional deserts made it appropriate that our Lord give her such a large share in our salvation.

Christ redeemed us by suffering. Mary was his co-helper in redeeming us by her suffering. To appreciate properly her cooperation we ought to attempt to measure her suffering as far as we can. Here at least four factors enter in determining the measure of her suffering: 1) her tenderness of feeling; 2) her eminent sanctity; 3) her love of her Son; 4) her insight into the nature of God and sin. Let us now enlarge on each of these.

1) Her Tenderness of Feeling:—"Since she was to co-operate in the redemptive work for her Son, and since redemption was to come to men chiefly through His Passion and Cross, Mary too needed to possess a large capacity for suffering. Now God disposes His gifts to His creatures in accordance with the mission to which he calls them" (Tanquerey-Arand, Doctrine and Devotion, p. 300).

2) Her Eminent Sanctity: Mary's holiness surpassed that of all the angels and saints. Yet eminent holiness or sanctity is not ordinarily attainable in this vale of tears unless there is present notable sacrifice or something like a real martyrdom on our part. And in a sense the term martyrdom can be applied to those who live a life of constant self-effacement and sacrifice and who are, as it were, living holocausts.

3) Her Love for Jesus: Mary loved Jesus incomparably more than anyone else. She loved Jesus as her All, and as her Son Whom she found most lovable and the most loving of all creatures. We know how some mothers love their sons. In Mary this mother's love is found in its sublimest stage. But this love of hers for her Son is precisely the cause of her martyrdom. Love here is the substitute for such bodily tortures as fire, the rack, pincers and boiling water which the martyrs endured. In fact, Mary's love is so great that her Son's sufferings become in a way her own. She feels the piercing nails, the cutting scourges, and the sharp thorns, and she tastes the vinegar and the gall. The martyrs were strengthened and consoled by the sufferings of her crucified Son. Mary is rather tortured and prostrated by them. Indeed, Mary is the Queen of martyrs, the martyr of love.

4) Her Insight into the Nature of God and the Malice of Sin: Christ's death agony in the garden was the result of His knowledge of God and of the malice of sin. Mary too was singularly graced with this same penetrating prerogative so that she knew God and all that He meant, better than any other purely human creature. So too was she enlightened on the malice and ugliness of sin. She grew in this knowledge of God and of the malice of sin and with its growth her sufferings correspondingly increased for she realized that therein lay the root of her Son's sufferings: the vision of His Father's holiness and loveliness and the evil of sin which, although innocent, He must expiate by the cross. We shall never fathom Mary's sufferings.

Mary's sufferings were many in number. The Church stresses her Seven Dolors especially, although she had many others. Of course we do not mean to imply that Mary did not have her joys. Far from it, as was pointed out in the previous chapter. There were the joys of her childhood; the joy of giving herself completely as a victim of love to her Lover Divine; the joys of her maidenhood; the joy of being betrothed to Joseph, the joy of the Incarnation, the joy of giving birth to the Son of God and finding Him in her arms, the joys of her Son's companionship, to mention a few.

Let us briefly sketch some of her Seven Dolors. During the ceremony of the presentation of her Child in the Temple, a holy old man, Simeon, came up to Mary and after taking the Child in his arms said to her: "Behold this Child is set for the fall, and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted; and thy own soul a sword shall pierce" (Luke 2, 25-35). Mary now sees that in spite of her Son's sufferings, He will not save all men. What an intense sorrow this must have been for her! She now knows that a life of suffering awaits her, for a sword shall pierce her soul. Now she realizes better the significance of the offering which she just made of her Son and herself.

After the ceremony of the presentation the Holy Family returned to Bethlehem where they decided to make their home. But scarcely had they gotten settled when an angel appeared one night to Joseph with this message: "Arise and take the Child and His mother, and fly into Egypt and be there until I shall tell thee. For it will come to pass that Herod will seek the Child to destroy it" (Matt., 2, 13). Again sorrow and suffering is in store for Mary. She is to have the trial of exile. Poverty too will now be more than ever her lot since only a few personal belongings can be taken to Egypt and they are in no position to buy a lot of new things.

After some years the Holy Family returned from

Egypt and took up their abode at Nazareth. There among their relatives and friends they lived a very happy life. There often during their periods of rest would Jesus, Mary and Joseph carry on conversations on the things of God, the mystery of the Redemption, and the necessity of suffering here below for one's own sanctification and that of others.

Jesus would give them a taste of that suffering for when He was twelve years old, they took Him up to Jerusalem to celebrate the feast of the Pasch. He spent about a week there, part of which He devoted to prayer and part to listening to the doctors of the Law who admired Him very much.

Meanwhile Mary and Joseph supposing, of course, that Jesus was in the crowd, journeyed homeward with the group from Galilee. Night comes, but Jesus is nowhere to be found. Mary and Joseph are now much worried. Immediately they return to Jerusalem to search for Him. Only after three days persistent and intense searching do they find Him sitting among the doctors in the Temple. Who will ever fathom the sorrow and sufferings of Mary during these days of search? When in all respect she complains to Him, His reply is significant: "How is it that you sought me: Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business" (Luke, 2, 49)? Thus in his eyes the things of God come first no matter if they bring sorrow to those who are nearest and dearest to Him.

Mary's grief here is great because she does not understand the fulness of the Divine plan. Silently and patiently, however, she bears this trial, a trial the greater because, with an apparent unconcern and lack of loving forethought, her Son pays little attention to her.

The last four Dolors of Mary are very familiar to us from the Stations of the Cross, since they are subject matter for the fourth, twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth stations. They need, then, no elaboration here. It would be well for us, however, to try to realize what sorrows were

Mary's at the successive stages of the Passion. The saints tell us that if Mary had not been miraculously sustained by God, these sorrows would have crushed her heart.

We now see what is in store for a true and faithful child of God. It is the lot of the cross—Mary's lot. Sometimes people will complain when they are afflicted with suffering and the cross. They would imply that they are unfortunate and abandoned by God. Was Mary, God's favorite daughter, unfortunate and abandoned by God in her sufferings? Suffering and the cross are really some of the choicest blessings for we can offer them up to the heavenly Father in union with the suffering of His Son, as our part in the Passion, as a part of our mission here below.

Mary is, indeed, for us a Model Sufferer. Let us note her patience, her purity of intention, and her fervor in the midst of her suffering. Let us ask Mary that she fill us with the same sentiments that animated the soul of Sister Elizabeth of the Trinity, a saintly Carmelite nun, when she wrote:

“Oh, how beautiful (Mary) . . . is in her long martyrdom! How majestic is her strength and sweetness! It is because she learnt from the Word Himself how those whom the Father selects as victims, those whom he chooses as associates in the great work of the Redemption, ought to suffer.

“She is there, at the foot of the cross, standing, strong and valiant, and my Master says to me, ‘Ecce Mater tua.’ He has given her to me for my mother. And now that He has returned to the Father, and has put me in His place on the cross, our Lady is there to teach me to suffer as he suffered.”

THE DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART  
AND THE APOSTOLATE OF SUFFERING

No doubt every age of the Church witnesses a certain stress upon certain dogmas and certain devotions. This is, perhaps, largely a result of each age's needs and characteristic temperament. Thus today the dogmas of the Mystical Body, sanctifying grace, and the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity have among others been especially stressed, while the devotions to the Sacred Heart and our Sorrowful Mother are now very widespread. It would seem profitable to see how the Apostolate of Suffering is linked up with some of these dogmas and devotions.

We have already shown how closely the Apostolate of Suffering is related to the doctrines of the Mystical Body and sanctifying grace. Now let us turn to devotions, and to particularize, to the devotion to the Sacred Heart, surely the most widespread of devotions. There is scarcely any need here to exhort anyone to practice this great devotion. We know that it is the ardent wish of our Lord and His Church and that suffices.

The principal practice and purpose of this devotion is reparation. Some centuries back—I refer especially to the seventeenth—men began to teach a loveless and joyless religion of aloofness and fear of God. They seemed to suspect that God had no heart and they warned the faithful away. They had put aside those sublime ideas which St. John had learned from his intimate converse with Christ and which he expressed later so forcibly when he said: “God is Love (I John, 3, 8).” Nor did they pay attention to the same conclusion, namely: “God is Love,” which St. Paul also had reached from his deep penetration into the mystery of our Lord’s Incarnation.

In protest to this attitude and insult, Christ revealed

His sacred Heart and all the treasures of Its love to the Church that He might convince men that God possesses a Heart, that HEART or LOVE is the dominant attribute of God, and that He wants a worship in which heart or love prevails over fear and all else.

The Sacred Heart of our Lord, then, is the symbol of Christ's love for us—a love both human and divine. It is particularly the symbol of His love revealed in the Passion and the Holy Eucharist. He was grieved and complained that men no longer realized His great love for them as manifested in these two great mysteries. He asked for reparation and a worship (or devotion) that would restore love for Him and His Father in the hearts of men. Hear His plaintive cries to St. Margaret Mary: "Behold this Heart Which has so loved men as to spare Itself nothing in order to gain their love, yet which has suffered more from their ingratitude than from the torments of the Passion." Or again: "Behold this Heart which has so loved men that it has spared nothing even to exhausting and consuming Itself, in order to testify Its love. In return I receive from the greater part only ingratitude, by their irreverence and sacrilege, and by the coldness and contempt they have for Me in this Sacrament of love."

In the light of this setting we see, then, that in a general way the "devotion to the Sacred Heart is a devotion to the Person of Jesus Himself, manifesting His love for us and showing us His heart as a symbol of that love" (Marmion, *Christ in His Mysteries*). We honor, then, this Heart as the symbol of the love of Jesus.

Certainly centuries eloquently bear witness to the fact that the devotion to the Sacred Heart has had a prominent role in actually bringing men back to the Eucharistic Christ and the suffering Christ, and through the Eucharist and the Passion to the Heart of God, who is the purest Love. Reparation, one of the principal elements to this devotion, has figured largely in accomplishing this return of men to the love of God.

This spirit of reparation is largely a reparation of love and not of justice, for reparation of justice, being a part of the virtue of penance, is concerned with the reparation which we owe to God for our personal sins. On the other hand, reparation of love is joining Christ in His atonement for the sins of mankind as well as for our own sins, and especially for the injuries received by Christ during His Passion and in the Holy Eucharist.

Right here the intimate connection between the devotion to the Sacred Heart and the Apostolate of Suffering becomes very evident. Reparation is obviously the principal practice of the devotion to the Sacred Heart. Yet the very foundations of reparation to the Sacred Heart lie in this that our Lord did not wish to perform the great task of reparation alone, but that He would have us, each and every one of us, as His associates in this great task to be redeeming Christs with Him our principal Redeemer. The Apostolate of Suffering, then, is a most sublime kind of reparation and thus a sublime devotion to the Sacred Heart.

The lives of the great servants of the Sacred Heart forcibly prove the close nexus between the devotion to the Sacred Heart and the Apostolate of Suffering. St. Margaret Mary, the great apostle of the Sacred Heart devotion, had a thirst for the cross and suffering which borders on the miraculous. All her writings bear eloquent witness to this inner longing of her soul. Thus to quote a few of her writings: "You must gladly embrace every opportunity of suffering, as a precious pledge of the love of the Sacred Heart, remembering that your sanctification depends upon this, that in all things you deny yourself, humble yourself, mortify yourself, in a word, crucify yourself at all times, and in all ways." Or again: "There is nothing that unites us so closely to the Sacred Heart of Jesus as the Cross, that precious pledge of His love." Blessed Claude de la Columbière, her spiritual director and prime helper in starting the propagation of this devotion, by his heroic vow of per-

fection, a vow by which he bound himself to observe the rules of his order, nailed himself also to the cross of continual suffering. What a grand apostolate of suffering a recent devotee of the Sacred Heart, Fr. William Doyle, S.J. who was killed as a chaplain in World War I, carried on incessantly for years!

Nor should we be surprised that the Apostolate of Suffering is so closely linked up with devotion to the Sacred Heart for after all this latter devotion is essentially a devotion of love. It is a devotion to the love of Jesus under the symbol of His Sacred Heart. But is it not a fact of human experience that love is best shown by sacrifice and suffering? Whom, indeed, do we consider the great heroic lovers of our country to be? Are they not the ones, who completely forgetful of themselves and unselfishly putting aside their own interests, devote themselves unreservedly to the cause of our country in the midst of great sacrifices, even to giving their very lives!

Would you be, then, a great friend of the Sacred Heart? One sure way which yields to none is to be an apostle of the cross and suffering.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE PRACTICE OF THE APOSTOLATE OF SUFFERING

**I**N SEVERAL of the previous chapters here and there were indicated various practices of the Apostolate of Suffering. Still a more detailed development of this subject is desirable. Here, then, a special chapter will be devoted to it.

In view of the intimate connection between the devotion to the Sacred Heart and the Apostolate of Suffering it is easy to see that anything that will further our devotion to the Sacred Heart, will also make us more devoted apostles of the cross, and likewise anything binding us more to the Apostolate of Suffering will make us more devoted disciples of the Sacred Heart.

We will find that these practices can for the most part be classified either under prayer or sacrifice, taking these latter in a broad sense. Since prayer requires a certain amount of sacrifice or suffering, it is easy to see how anything classed under it can be classed also, at least broadly, under suffering.

Obviously our first duty or practice in this matter is to observe the ten commandments and the laws of the Church. This will require no small amount of suffering. Exact fidelity in this matter of attending Mass and of observing the Church's laws of fast and abstinence—to mention some duties common to all—requires sacrifice. A careful observance, too, of the commandments covering charity, purity, and fairness to others in matter of justice, entails no small amount of self-denial. We are apostles of the cross if we are faithful in all these matters and inform these good works by a proper intention whereby we offer them all up in union with our Lord's suffering on the

cross for the salvation of souls, or that we may fill up what is wanting of Christ's Passion.

We may, however, be impelled to do more than this. Any devoted disciple of the Sacred Heart will sense this urge. In the matter of prayer, a devoted lover of the Sacred Heart will feel the urge to devote each first Friday of the month as a day of special reparation and devotion to the Sacred Heart. Such a soul will offer, besides, his or her Communion not merely on that day but also on other days in reparation to the Sacred Heart. Then, beyond these, there are such practices as offering the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in reparation, making special visits to our Eucharistic Lord, making a weekly Holy Hour "to appease the anger of God by imploring mercy for sinners and to sweeten in some way the bitterness which (our Lord) felt when (His) disciples abandoned (Him), being unable to watch one hour with (Him)" (from St. Margaret Mary). It is suggested further that we frequently offer the precious Blood which flowed from the wound of the Sacred Heart when it was pierced with a lance. Of course we take it for granted that during these exercises acts of consecration to the Sacred Heart are made. Our late Holy Father, Pius XI, highly praised the act of consecration to the Sacred Heart. These are some of the practices which a prayerful devotion to the Sacred Heart includes.

For some, devotion to the Sacred Heart will begin with prayer and end there. While a prayerful devotion to the Sacred Heart is very good in itself and thus pleasing to our Lord, still it is not as perfect as the sacrificial devotion to our Lord's Heart. True, it is scarcely possible to have a real prayerful devotion to the Sacred Heart without in some degree having a sacrificial devotion. Most people emphasize one or the other.

It is well to realize, however, the true loftiness of the sacrificial devotion. A rather detailed discussion of this sacrificial devotion will be given here.

Let us, then get into the realm of sacrifice in its real

sense. Crosses and sufferings are at all times, but especially today, the common lot of humanity. At one time it is sickness or hard work, at another it is a financial crisis or the loss of a dear one. What a sorrow the loss of the middle-aged Edsel Ford must have caused his Father and Mother! The best of medical science did not save him. Other crosses which might be mentioned also are such things as loss of reputation and good name, humiliations, inclemencies of weather, mental trials, as scruples, anxieties, rebuffs and slights from others, failure of others to appreciate our good qualities and merits, fancied and otherwise, etc.

But it is one thing to have these trials and sufferings and quite another to bear them properly. The attitude we ought to have in this matter is: 1) a patient acceptance of all these crosses and sufferings, and 2) an unreserved surrender or abandonment of ourselves to Divine Providence in all things. We simply let God take over the reins of our life. We put Him completely in charge and patiently accept whatever His providence chooses to send us. We act as a staff in His hands.

Surely this is a great manifestation of our deep and ardent love of God. We show our love for another by bringing our will in agreement with his, by sacrificing our own opinion for his, by submitting to the least of his desires, and in general by making his will the norm of our activity in his regard. Now this is the very thing that we are doing when we unreservedly abandon ourselves to God's Providence and patiently accept whatever crosses and suffering he deigns to send us. Here then we have a certain proof and measure of our love of God. We can measure our love of God by measuring our deficiencies here.

All of us have duties and responsibilities in our lives. We know that we do God's will when we faithfully carry them out. The true apostle of the cross will see the importance of faithfully performing these duties and acting in accordance with his responsibilities. To act otherwise

would be mere deception and the passing up of an opportunity to carry out God's will. Fidelity, absolute fidelity to our duties and obligations must be our constant endeavor and motto.

This fidelity we can safeguard by having a daily order in our lives. After all, it seems foolish to leave big and important things to chance or to our passing moods. It is certainly a fine practice to have a fixed schedule for the big and important things of the day, the week, the month, and the year. We want to be sure that we shall not fail. Fidelity to a carefully planned schedule will ensure this. This schedule should detail the generosity by which we intend to serve God. It might cover such things as the times of rising and retiring, the amount of sleep to be ordinarily taken, the use of cosmetics, the matter of dress, the time to be devoted to mental prayer and the place and period of the day for it, daily Mass and Holy Communion (if these are possible), extra practices of reparation to the Sacred Heart, recollection and use of aspirations, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, practices of exterior mortification, fidelity in the matter of your job in all its details, temperance in the matter of food and drink, practice of silence for ensuring recollection, Holy Hour, spiritual reading, prayers during the day, weekly confession, and daily examination of conscience before retiring. Other things, besides, might suggest themselves.

This matter of fidelity, it is true, will require a lot of self-denial and generosity on our part. Yet any effort spent here is well spent. Here rather than being used by God as He sees fit—a thing we do when we abandon ourselves unreservedly to His Providence—we are rather using ourselves and our wills as much as we can out of love of this same God. We are more active and less passive. We are martyrs to duty and in some little way we imitate our Lord Who in all things did the Will of His Father. In fact the governing and integrating principle of His life was to "do the things that please Him (His Father)." Would you

become a soldier of Christ? Here is surely a safe and excellent way, for by your fidelity to duty you are constantly showing your loyalty and personal attachment to Him.

Let us see in some detail what this fidelity will imply in lives of ordinary people. For a bus driver this fidelity will require that he maintain his patience when others argue and are very mean to him as he is trying to do several things at that very moment. He is supposed to miss no fares in spite of the crowded bus, try to keep his time schedule, be accurate in giving change, and drive carefully, for he has lives to protect. Spotters may be watching him and may be very mean to him. Others may annoy him by presenting large bills for fare change. To do all this, besides bearing the inclemencies of weather, hardships resulting from bad roads, old busses, fast schedules, etc. requires much suffering.

Clerks in stores have to put up with much abuse. In the morning they will attractively and nicely arrange their counter. Soon after the store is opened, some customers will come in and pull everything on one or another counter apart. It would not be so bad if they regularly bought something. But they leave the mess for the clerk to put in order. All the ill manners that such clerks have to tolerate during the day! People in the midst of sales' transactions butt in and ask questions because they will not wait. Then the clerks have to stand on their feet all day long. Surely here is a fruitful apostolate of self-effacement and suffering.

Telephone operators too, have their trials. People ask them for information which is readily available in the telephone book. Some demand that they be almost omniscient or else they are bawled out. They have to hear rough and vulgar language. Those at information centers in passenger stations, or similar public servants, will have to put up with like experiences.

Secretaries and stenographers too have often to bear much abuse. All day long they hear: "Do this, get this

done, etc." A high standard of quality in their typing and other work is demanded. Perhaps they might be exposed at times to personal indignities of language and some of their bosses might expect certain liberties with them which any decent person could not tolerate.

Any school teacher who is faithful to his or her job, will have many crosses to bear. Perhaps the school authorities ask him or her to use immoral text books or they vigorously oppose any suggestion or mention of religion to the students. They have to bear also much abuse from uncouth and ill-mannered students. They have, besides, the hard, endless, and tedious duty of correcting reams of homework. Often the parents of their students are very mean and unjustly accuse them of neglect, favoritism, and lack of responsibility. Thus they have many opportunities at their very door to fill up the sufferings of Christ.

Nor must we omit the ordinary housewife. Normally she has to get up early in the morning all year around to get a good breakfast for her husband. Then she will have to prepare a good and tasty breakfast later on for the children after she gets them up. She has to get them ready for school. She ought to show a certain ingenuity in having for them things that are attractive and fitting for the season at hand. After her husband and children are gone, the dishes have to be washed, the house cleaned and properly ordered, further meals prepared, etc. Surely here is a fertile field for self-control and long-suffering. She should also provide and regulate the entertainment of her children, supervise and check radio programs which the children listen to, be at hand when her husband is at home, and in the midst of all this have a good sense of humor as in cheering up her husband and children by telling them that, according to statistics, we are the healthiest people that ever lived. She should too, show contentment with her lot and have no envy of other women.

Yes, hers is a seven-day week, with work hours going late into the night when her husband is sitting in an easy

chair. Besides all this, there is the added work of helping charitable organizations such as the altar society. Surely then the arena of sanctity and suffering of an ordinary housewife is right in her own home.

Her husband too will have plenty of crosses if he conducts himself properly. Among other things he should not bring his business troubles home. Let him settle them himself. He ought always to be pleasant at home nor should he complain when he sees things there a little out of order. Let him even take a hand in helping his wife with her work. He should have a real hand in the upbringing of the children, especially during the adolescent period. Here he must keep the confidence of his children.

He has, besides, the task and duty of financially supporting his family. Here he should be generous with his wife and let her normally spend money as she sees fit. In all such dealings with her, he should be considerate and not imperious.

The outside maintenance of the home is his peculiar sphere of activity. This will include cutting the grass, keeping the shrubbery trimmed, watering the lawn, keeping the garage clean and orderly, and odd repair jobs. The care of the furnace and of much of the cellar belongs to him and he should, at least occasionally, help his wife with the laundry and dishes. He ought to be always looking for ways and means of providing recreation and breaks for his wife. The following ought to be a rather frequent remark from him: "You go out; I will take care of the kids tonight."

These few examples bring out rather evidently the great amount of self-effacement and sacrifice which a careful fidelity to one's duties in life requires.

Some souls have even gone further. They will long for suffering. They will consider all time lost that is without suffering like St. Margaret Mary. Her love for suffering almost surpasses all human conception. Hear these striking words of hers: "The cross is a precious treasure of

which we must take the greatest care lest we be robbed of it. I know nothing more calculated to make a long life tolerable than suffering in the spirit of love. Let us therefore suffer cheerfully, without murmuring, counting every moment lost which brings us no suffering." And again: "Likeness to our suffering Saviour is the greatest boon which we can desire for ourselves. On this account only ought we wish for life, to have the happiness of suffering for love, not through our own choice. And St. Theresa's cry was: "To suffer or to die, but rather to suffer." "Not to die, but to suffer" came from the lips of St. Magdalene of Pazzi.

Although St. Margaret ardently loved the cross, still she believed that we ought not pray for suffering, but rather abandon ourselves to pure love, to "be crucified and annihilated according to its good pleasure." She considered it more perfect to ask for nothing and refuse nothing.

These souls differ from those who abandon themselves unreservedly to God's Will in their attitude. The first may not love the cross and suffering, but they see its importance and thus act accordingly by their unreserved act of surrender to whatever suffering God may send them. The second really love, long for and desire the cross and suffering, though realizing their weakness and God's will in their regard, they may not ask that extra and extraordinary sufferings be sent to them.

It is true that there have been souls who have asked that God send them additional sufferings over and beyond those sent by His ordinary Providence. Still in this matter great caution must be exercised. There is danger here of illusion and rashness. We need very special direction here if we feel inclined to ask for such sufferings and crosses. It is likely too that God gives a special vocation to souls who are to tread this thorny path by, first of all, especially choosing them, then by warning them in advance as to what they will have to suffer, and finally, by asking them for their free consent.

This third group of souls practice the highest type of love, the highest perfection of love, which is sacrificial love—the folly of the cross. Here the love of suffering drives these souls to seek and glory in every sort of interior and exterior trial that they might be more closely united to Christ crucified and have a greater share in His Passion. Still, to belong to this group it is not necessary to ask for extra and extraordinary sufferings, but it is enough to love, desire, and embrace ardently those crosses which God in His Providence sends us. We want these crosses, we seek these crosses because we seek only a life of victimhood and immolation.

The world most likely will scoff and laugh at this sacrificial love. It might even term it a mild form of insanity. Well, then, if that is true, St. Paul, St. Andrew, St. Margaret Mary, the Little Flower, and Fr. William Doyle, S.J. who died in 1916 as a war chaplain, had this type of insanity. Many others who belong to this latter class could be mentioned.

We take it for granted that any soul who wishes to be very generous in its devotion to the Sacred Heart and to be a real apostle of the cross, will, besides, practice mortification. We know that all the great servants of God have normally practiced exterior mortification as far, at least, as normal prudence would dictate. They looked at the Crucified and that was enough. They wanted to be just like Him. Besides abstinence and fasting, some exterior practices of their mortification are such things as kneeling with extended arms when alone, depriving our eyes of sights which they might enjoy, and refraining from sitting in the easiest and most comfortable chairs. We ought to seek spiritual guidance in this matter of exterior mortification.

Let the heroic example of such laymen as Matt Talbot and Saint Thomas Moore be an inspiration to us. They surely must now rejoice that they chose this hard but successful way.

Here, then, are some of the main practices of devotion for the soul who desires to be really generous with the Sacred Heart as well as be a loyal apostle of the cross. May the realization that suffering and crosses besides sanctifying us, sanctify others, urge us to a generous self-conquest. Let us realize that Christ not only sanctifies His own sufferings, but those of His Mystical Body as well. He makes these latter sufferings His own, He makes them in some way one with His, He offers them to His heavenly Father for the salvation of souls. Thus, our dear Lord gives to these precious sufferings and crosses something of the sanctifying power of His own Passion and death. Our duty is surely clear. We must help our Crucified Master in carrying the cross to sanctify ourselves and others.

We do not have to go far for inspiration here. What a love for the cross thousands of martyrs down the centuries have shown! Our own North American martyrs can be a great inspiration for us. How many too are those who consecrated themselves by a life of virginity to God, have undergone a daily martyrdom of self-imposed austerities to remain loyal to their pledges! Nor should we pass over all those countless men and women in religious life who have crucified themselves to the cross of daily martyrdom by exact fidelity to their vows and rules. Over and above all of these, we have in the world millions of saintly souls who, to remain faithful to their obligations and their state of life, have gladly offered themselves as victims to God and have eagerly sought the trials sent them by God. May the grand example which these great and heroic souls have given us, make us realize the privilege that is ours in suffering with Christ for the salvation of souls.

THE ACTIVE APOSTLE'S APOSTOLATE  
OF SUFFERING

ONE might conceivably and mistakenly think that just because the active apostle or missionary is largely engaged in one of the apostolates, namely, the external one, that he is thereby excused from the other two, the apostolates of prayer and suffering, or little concerned with them. This would be a great delusion and one too which we Americans cannot guard against too carefully for there is on our part a tendency to overstress activity and external efficiency without paying the proper attention to the importance of the apostolate of prayer and suffering.

Here let us see what part the active apostle has in the Apostolate of Suffering, or the connection between the active apostolate and the Apostolate of Suffering. Scripture scholars seem to think that the classic text on the Apostolate of Suffering, namely: "I rejoice in my suffering for you . . . (for I) fill up those things that are wanting of the suffering of Christ in my flesh, for His Body, which is the Church" (Col. 1, 24), applies very especially to apostolic men.

Thus St. Paul, the great active apostle and inspiration of all future missionaries, by his preaching to the heathens, filled up any deficit which our Lord Himself may have purposely left for him. This too St. Paul accomplished at the cost of much suffering endured in his own body. As Christ was wearied by labor, so too was Paul; as Christ thirsted, so too did Paul; as Christ was without a place to rest His head, so was Paul. These latter hardships bring to our minds part of the suffering lot which the journeys and teaching up and down Palestine brought to our Lord. But these He did not endure primarily for the pagans, for He confined His apostolate to the lost sheep of Israel.

Paul also completed by his own personal sufferings the measure of our Lord's Passion allotted to him for the Mystical Body. These sufferings cover the whole field of suffering from self-imposed conquest to persecutions received at the hands of others, be they fasting, overwork, hunger, exposure to bad weather, lack of properly provided clothing, stripes from others, imprisonment, shipwreck, stoning, perils at the hands of robbers, of foreign nations, and even of his own nation. Paul himself gives us a catalog of some of them in one of his letters to the Corinthians. It runs as follows:

"They are ministers of Christ (I speak as one less wise); I am more; in many more labors, in prisons more frequently, in stripes above measure, in deaths often. Of the Jews five times did I receive forty stripes, save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once I was stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I was in the depth of the sea. In journeying often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils from my own nation, in perils from Gentiles, in perils of the city, in perils of the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils from false brethren. In labour and painfulness, in much watchings, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides these things which are without: my daily instance, the solicitude for all the churches" (II Cor. 11, 23-28)!

This is Paul's contribution, indeed, which he offered for the growth and spread of the church, Christ's Mystical Body, among the heathens that they too might share in Christ's Passion and Redemption. It seems to be a passion of Paul's entire being to suffer and to be like Christ Crucified. He tells us that he knew only Christ and Him Crucified and that he bore in his body the marks of Christ. We can, however, readily realize why Paul so loved the cross for he knew that suffering and the cross were important factors in the salvation of souls. He knew that in bearing these sufferings, he was helping to apportion Christ's infinite redemptive merits to souls either for their

salvation or further sanctification. He knew that his sufferings were a part of Christ's Passion. Thus suffering and the cross he loved and embraced with all the fiery enthusiasm of his great soul.

St. Paul's life is certainly the ideal and pattern for all active apostles and especially for foreign missionaries. He was surely an exceptional foreign missionary, evangelizing as he did, country after country and reaping a great harvest of souls for Christ. In the light of this, perhaps we see a little more clearly the huge task facing the real active modern apostle. It is a task not merely concerned with the final touches of conversion, but one which carries the Christlike missionary into the Apostolate of Suffering.

The modern apostle must learn to be ever patient, even when others around him are very impatient and mean. He must work on and on even when he is already borne down by the labor of the day. Strange customs, unmannerly and uncouth ways of foreign people he must bear smilingly. Homesickness he must put aside for his great work of saving souls. Strange food, odd and primitive surroundings, poor shelter, endless tramping when weary, he must expect as a part of his daily lot. To carry this huge load over a period of years with enthusiasm and spirit and, besides, impose upon himself other voluntary penances, requires a courageous and heroic heart which great graces must support. This is the modern apostle's and missionary's Apostolate of Suffering.

Might not we, then, realizing the heavy load which the genuine modern apostle and missionary must bear, remember him in our prayers, good works, and especially in our sufferings. We certainly can do great work here, for we are helping one who especially should fill in his person what is wanting in Christ's sufferings, and reach his measure of suffering to the full. Here one realizes, too, how closely the apostolate of prayer and suffering are related to each other. In a way they make up one and the same apostolate which might be conceived as composed of two

elements, the suppliant element and the victim element. Nor is this strange for was not Christ's life of prayer and suffering one? What a motive, then, we have to exercise ourselves in the Apostolate of Prayer, bound as the latter is to the Apostolate of Suffering. Patient suffering without prayer is practically impossible, and much prayer without much patient suffering is not likely.

Nor must we forget that we all, whether we are priests or not, have or at least should have a share in this active apostolate which for lay people is nothing else than the apostolate of Catholic Action. Catholic Action, let it be recalled, is nothing else than the participation of the laity in the works of the hierarchy. To be a real apostle of Catholic Action in these days when so much is to be done and so many helpers are not at hand to do it, much devotion to the Apostolate of Suffering is necessary. For in the proper exercise of the active apostolate with St. Paul we will feel the sting of overwork and fatigue.

Here, if we are loyal and devoted apostles, our generosity will prompt us to support Catholic enterprises as our foreign missions and our Catholic educational institutions, by both labor and financial assistance. We will, no doubt, be criticized by others for our zeal even though it is carried on by us at the price of great personal sacrifices. Zeal for this apostolate will make us prefer to spend some of our free periods and idle moments in its multifarious works rather than giving them wholly to such things as parties, dances, and other purely recreational amusements.

Thus, while we are devotedly engaged in our exterior apostolate, of necessity we are forced to endure many hardships. This is inevitably tied up with true apostolic zeal. These are some of our contributions to the Apostolate of Suffering. They help us to fill up the measure of what is wanting in Christ's Passion. If, besides, they are offered up with purity of intention and in union with Christ's sufferings, they greatly further not only our works of

Catholic Action, but also the zealous works of others. They are part of our contribution to the great work of the Redemption. They are a part of the active apostle's Apostolate of Suffering.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST AND THE APOSTOLATE OF SUFFERING

ANY TIME that we think over life seriously, we must come to the conclusion that man's first duty is to surrender himself completely to God, to the Divine Providence and Lovableness which is worthy of all love. We must be convinced that our whole life is *for God*, that all our faculties and powers, and, in a word, our entire self should be used for the praise, reverence, and service of God. This, we clearly see, is God's Divine Plan in our regard. This means, we further see, *eternal success* and salvation.

We are doubly convinced when we contemplate the havoc of sin. Man was created to be God's son, to share in God's own inner life through grace, to be a temple of the Blessed Trinity, and finally to see and possess God in heaven through all eternity. But original sin temporarily destroyed all these supernatural gifts until our redemption through Christ was accomplished. Even now after our redemption this evil of sin we must continually avoid, if we are to go on in the way of salvation.

To surrender ourselves to the Divine Goodness and to avoid sin, we see that we must properly use creatures—the things of this world, for, after all, sin is nothing but a bad use of creatures. Every time we have sinned, it was some misuse of a creature. But why this misuse? Further analysis reveals to us that the source of this misuse was invariably due to strong or inordinate attachments to certain things. These inordinate attachments made us use creatures independently of God and against His Will. Thus we see the extreme importance of a detached heart, or simply, of detachment, for if we are detached we will avoid sin and nothing will prevent us from giving ourselves wholly to God. *Nothing can hold a detached heart*

from God, nothing will make a detached heart sin. Further prayerful pondering over the facts of death, particular judgment, and the possibility of hell, will convince us of the utter folly of a worldly and sinful life, of a life in which there are inordinate attachments to creatures.

But this, we see, is a big and involved program, which demands that we surrender ourselves completely to God, by avoiding all sin as far as possible and by praising, reverencing, and serving Him, through the proper use of creatures or using them in so far as they help us to reach God and refraining from using them in so far as they keep us from reaching God; and this proper use of creatures, we see, is only achieved through *detachment*.

Where are we to get the inspiration, the strength, the heroism, to do all this? In difficulties, great enterprises, and achievements, we instinctively, as it were, seek leadership. We want somebody to lead the way, to give us courage, enlightenment, and strength.

It is truly remarkable what human leaders like Napoleon, Caesar, and Alexander the Great—to mention a few—have been able to do with men under their brave and daring leadership. Men have willingly given up their lives and their very all for such leaders, and at times too, in immoral, or at least, shady causes.

Have we, then, in this great enterprise of surrendering ourselves completely to God, of achieving eternal success through salvation, such a leader to whom we can turn for inspiration, courage, strength, solace, but especially for *leadership* and *guidance*? Yes, we have, and that leader is Jesus Christ.

*Christ's character:* While Christ is God, yet He is man. He is God with a human nature. He is God with flesh and bone. He bridges the way for us. He has all that is appealing and attractive for the human heart for besides being God, He is *the one perfect man*. This explains why so many down the centuries have been so completely taken up with Him that all else meant nothing at all to them.

He was their ALL and for Him they gave *their all*. All of us can say with St. Paul: "He loved me and delivered Himself for me" (Gal. 2, 20). And at what a price! The price was to be born poor, obscure, and amidst sufferings; to be taken a long distance elsewhere to save His life from the cruel Herod; to live for many years a hidden life of toil and subjection; to fast, to suffer and undergo long vigils in a desert; tirelessly to go up and down Palestine preaching, comforting the downtrodden, healing the sick, and enlightening all if they would be enlightened; and finally to die after His bitter Passion with its agony in Gethsemane, its trials before the high priests and Pilate, its scourging and crowning with thorns, and lastly its crucifixion. And for us, of course, all these sufferings of Jesus Christ have meant everything. They have meant the difference between heaven and its exclusion. They have meant the difference between personal, moral, and social uplifting and their contrary—personal, moral, and social degradation. It is not strange, then, that those who have weighed values best, have been wholly taken up and completely attached to Christ. Theirs was a wholehearted and personal attachment to Christ. He became THE BIG REALITY of their life. Nor were they foolhardy in this for they clearly saw that without Him their life was meaningless, purposeless, uninspiring, and hopeless. He on the other hand gave it real meaning, purpose, inspiration, and hope, besides a glowing ideal and most attractive model in Himself.

What other human leader has ever had or ever could have this attractiveness and dynamic appeal which Christ has? Or again, what other human leader has had the beautiful, winning, and inspiring character of Christ? None even approached Him. Still men, on account of their admiration of other leaders and their qualities, have followed them wholeheartedly, *blindly at times*, and gave to them *their all*.

*Christ's Cause:* Christ's cause is as universal as life it-

self since for the glory of God and man's salvation He came upon this earth to establish a Kingdom, the Church—His Mystical Body. He longs for all to become members of the Church, His Kingdom.

The greatness of Christ's cause can only be realized by measuring its universality and by considering the issues at stake. Thus it is not merely a matter of one nation at a certain point of history, but it rather involves the whole world of all human beings from the beginning until the end of time. To everyone, nobody excluded, is His appeal addressed. It is an appeal, too, which wins or at least should win all hearts for here the issues which are involved, are the supreme ones of life taken either collectively or singly, namely: man's eternal welfare, eternity, heaven, hell, and God's glory and service.

Nor can anyone say that there are no real enemies here to combat, for they are the deadliest, cruelest, most deceptive, and ever-present ones of sin, the devil and all the other evil forces that work for the enslavement of God's children. His cause, then, is one that seeks liberation, liberty, and freedom from these bitter enemies. If men have given their lives to leaders for the sake of promoting worldly causes, what should we not do for Christ?

*Christ's Achievement:* We still might admit the grandeur of His Person and the greatness of His cause, but yet doubt whether we should have confidence in Him, in His ability to achieve results. "Glance over the world and back through history and see what the leadership of our Lord has accomplished and is accomplishing today. It has civilized the world, given humane ways to mankind and moral regeneration to our race. Look at the monuments that have been erected in the past and are being raised every day to the glory of the name of Jesus Christ—those of brick and stone, those of art and letters, those of religion and charity, the countless societies of men, the religious congregations, the works organized for religion, education and charity all over the world—in a word, the

vast and marvellous achievement which represents the whole Catholic Church in as far as it has been visible to the exterior eye during these two thousand years. Above these monuments and a greater thing by far are the lives and leaders that Christ has inspired and is inspiring today. Here according to human standards is the test of real greatness, the power to lift up other men out of their mediocrity, to clothe them with His own power and make them leaders of still other men.

"Yet all this is only the external trace of Christ's achievement and leadership. 'My kingdom,' He said 'is not of this world.' It is partly in this world but not *of* it. It is unseen, therefore, for it is in the souls of men and in the realm of the divine. If we could peer into the souls of men and behold the real kingdom of God in the making, if we could witness the spiritual advances, the victories, the divine conquests inspired, supported and brought to their perfection by Christ, leading in our own souls and in the souls of the myriads about us, we should have some dim appreciation of the true greatness of His leadership. Only the omniscient God understands the full significance of what is going on every hour of the day in your soul and in mine just because we are following Christ. Judgment day will reveal it all to us—rather, when the final judgment is over and we gaze in wonderment upon that vast throng of radiant beings, human, yet divinely lovely with the very splendor and loveliness of the Son of God, then we shall understand to our eternal delight the full divine achievement of Jesus Christ" (F. ffl. McMenamy, S.J., Manuscript Retreat Notes).

What human leader of history has in any way accomplished such heroic achievements on such a grand scale! How insignificant now are the achievements of Alexander the Great, Caesar, and Napoleon, compared to those of Christ!

If there is anyone or any leader in whom we can place *absolute* confidence, it is certainly in Christ. We simply

cannot go wrong. We simply cannot fail. On the other hand, how many have been foiled by human leaders after they had given their all and dedicated their entire life to them? If we follow Christ, success is assured for there is no possibility of defeat.

*Christ's Call and Plan:* Christ's call corresponds to Christ's cause which after all is *our* cause. Thus He appeals to *me*, to the whole world and every individual in it with this dynamic appeal: "My Will is to make a conquest of the whole world, to overcome My enemies, and thus enter into the glory of My Father. Whoever desires to come with Me must labor with Me, in order that having followed me in pain, he may follow Me in glory."

A noble project—all surely will admit, for it is a project by which Christ intends to wipe out the powers of evil, to subject men to His all-wise and loving leadership and rule, and thus under His leadership to deliver to His Father "an *eternal and universal* Kingdom, . . . a Kingdom of truth and life, a Kingdom of holiness and grace, a Kingdom of justice, love, and peace" (Preface for the Mass of Christ, the King). Christ desires to reign *in men's mind* by having them submit unreservedly to His revealed truths. He desires to reign *in their wills* through unquestioning obedience to His commandments. He desires to reign *in their hearts* by complete adherence to Him and love of Him and by their prompt rejection of worldliness.

It is, then, the desire of Christ to conquer all the world, i.e., to gather all to His kingdom. Now we know that He is to accomplish this by the great work of the redemption. This is His way to gather and form His kingdom. Other leaders have used different methods, such as war in its different forms. Christ would form His kingdom by the way of suffering, humiliations, hardships, and finally by His bitter Passion and Death.

Here in this great and difficult task He calls for followers and He promises to them a share in His glory, something which will certainly be carried out.

And, what is more striking, He really gives to His followers a real part in the redemption. They "will fill up what is wanting in His sufferings" for the formation and growth of His kingdom. Just as any ordinary leader does not carry out alone the entire warfare, so Christ would out of love of us, invite us to help Him here. We are thus co-workers, victims and sufferers with Him. We are in a certain secondary sense CO-REDEEMERS. Christ would form His great kingdom by the apostolate of the cross or suffering. He calls for volunteers in this great apostolate.

All this huge project, namely, the conquering of the powers of darkness and the spreading of His Kingdom He intends to accomplish *through men*. Thus we may join Him and work with Him in this great enterprise. In fact, He invites us and He ardently hopes that we will accept His invitation.

It is surely an invitation that we can scarcely refuse if we are at all noble-minded. Christ does not send us to fight while He remains safe in the rear. No, He fights with us, He lives with us, He bears all hardships with us, in fact He leads the way. He is first in the front line.

Of course, it will be hard. But after all, is there anything in life that is great which is not hard? And certain victory awaits us, the victory of eternal glory and everlasting vision of the all-lovable God. It seems that we simply have to consent to the attractive invitation of Christ. No other alternative seems possible. Think of the multitude of men who down the centuries have accepted the invitation of worldly leaders and at times in unjust causes, as today is the case of that large number of people following godless leadership to utter privation and bitter death. If they did these things for less worthy causes under a far less noble leader, how can we fail Christ, how can we refuse the call of One Who is the greatest character of history, the greatest genius of history, One Who is sympathetic, kind, all-loving and all-lovable, One in Whom is

Divine Knowledge, Wisdom, Goodness, Mercy, Attractiveness and Beauty?

To answer His call "is to live Christ's life and to share in His mission of suffering and saving souls. It is a companionship with Christ in all things, strengthened here on earth by the Communion of His Body and Blood, and perfected in Heaven by the sight of His glory and our transformation into Him" (Ambruzzi, Sp. Exer. of St. Ignatius, p. 68).

*Our Response:* As in all other matters of this kind, there will be different responses here. But there are only two that make *sense*.

The first response will be that of those who offer themselves *to labor with Christ*, to fight God's enemies and our own—Satan, sin, the world, and our passions—and thus establish in our souls God's kingdom. Briefly this is to follow Christ in the observance of the commandments. It is this union and incorporation with Christ, not the mere avoidance of evil and the doing of good, that makes us Christians, soldiers of Christ.

Others more generous and filled with love will make *a complete surrender of themselves to Christ*. They know that they can trust our Lord. They are working **WITH HIM**. With Him, no matter what the hardships, crosses, or sufferings, they will come out on top, they will never regret this act of unreserved surrender. They long to be Christ's special friends and companions; they long not only to plant deeply His kingdom in their hearts, but also to labor, to suffer, to carry the cross, even to die, to plant it in the hearts of all men.

They have been fascinated and captivated by our Blessed Lord's daring heroism, the heroism of His love. They cannot forget the heroic self-effacement which He endured for each and every one of us. For them He becomes **THE HERO** of all times. They see and cannot forget this Divine Hero and charming Leader born in Bethlehem amidst poverty and helplessness; working at

Nazareth as an obscure and poor artisan, toiling relentlessly during His public life during which He was an apparent failure, closing His short life by His bitter Passion and Death, and choosing all this, too, for them when He could have had the very opposites. "You know the graciousness of our Lord Jesus Christ, that being rich, He became poor for your sakes; that through His poverty, you might become rich" (II Cor., 8, 9). "He hath delivered Himself for us, an oblation and a sacrifice to God for an odor of sweetness" (Eph. 5, 2). This is the heroism of Jesus Christ, a heroism which these loyal souls cannot resist and thus they will offer themselves to Christ unreservedly and they will try to catch this same heroism by bearing all injuries, reproaches, poverty, hardships, sufferings, and crosses for love of Him if that be His Will.

These great souls are reconciled to the hardships and sufferings involved in this divine military expedition and strenuous battle against the evil in themselves and others for they realize first of all the necessity of this warfare and the certainty of the victory; secondly, the vastness and supreme importance of the enterprise, differing as it does in no respect from Christ's very own and that of the Church, or that of the huge array of souls whose sole desire it has ever been to spend themselves completely for the love of God and the salvation of souls. To build up, to defend and enlarge Christ's kingdom in ourselves and others—what a grand enterprise and what efforts should we not be willing to make to accomplish this? These efforts to extend His kingdom in ourselves and others consist in self-denial, sacrifice, prayer, labor, suffering, and the cross after Christ's own example. Trying as these efforts are on our nature, the glorious end in view makes us ready to use them not only *willingly*, but even *joyfully*.

The connection between Christ's kingdom and the Apostolate of Suffering must now be evident. In earlier chapters it was often mentioned, but its importance is so great that scarcely too much can be said about it.

Surely all of us, moved by the grandeur of our Lord's enterprise and complete certainty of His and our victory, will offer ourselves wholeheartedly to follow Him by carrying our cross and by our Apostolate of Suffering. Well might we offer ourselves to Him in an offering similar to the following:

"Dear Lord, if men will enlist their services to worldly leaders, leaders sometimes who are far from having pure motives and high ideals and this too at the cost of great sacrifice, at times at the cost of their very lives, how much more should I not give myself wholeheartedly to Your service and enlist in Your army and expedition.

"In fighting for you, I am fighting for the greatest of all human leaders in the greatest of all causes, the building-up of Your kingdom, the Church, Your Mystical Body. This is the greatest career I can choose. Thus willingly I enroll my services.

"And for the weapons, the weapons of self-denial, the cross and suffering, these gladly I embrace when I realize that they are the means which You use in the building-up of the Church, Your Mystical Body. In your Goodness You would not do it all. You would give us a share in this great work of the redemption. You would let something for us to 'fill up.' You would have us Your co Helpers, co-factors, and in some certain way co-redeemers with You in this, Your greatest work.

"Is there any wonder, then, that I should be enthusiastic about this great apostolate? Is there any wonder, then, that I should give myself wholeheartedly to the Apostolate of Suffering, seeing that you made it one of Your great weapons in the building-up of Your kingdom, the Mystical Christ. Is there any wonder that I should be thrilled realizing that You have purposely given to me a share in Your great work of the redemption? Is there any wonder that I, realizing that I have a share in Your Passion, should be on fire with a love of the cross—the Apostolate of Suffering?

“Yes, dear Lord, most gladly do I join Your ranks, most gladly do I enlist in Your army, most gladly do I take up Your weapons of detachment, humiliations, the cross and suffering. Thank You, dear Lord, for this high privilege and one which I ask You to make me faithful to all the days of my life. Amen.”

OUR DIVINE EXEMPLAR IN BEARING  
THE CROSS—OUR LORD

WHILE Christ our Lord came on this earth primarily to redeem us, still we must never forget that He came also to teach us how to live both by example and precept. As we saw in the last chapter, He is to be our Leader in the way of life. He himself has told us that He is "the way, the truth, and the life" (John, 14, 6). And did not God the Father say several times: "This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased: hear ye Him" (Matt. 17, 5; Mark, 9, 6; Luke 9, 35; Mark 1, 11; II Pet. 1, 17). In the Church down the centuries all great and holy men have looked to Him as their Divine Exemplar of living.

Christ, therefore, is our Divine Model in all things. He is the perfect Son of God. He is One Who exemplifies at all times *divine ways* and *divine manners*. To Him we must go if we would learn how to *live divinely*. To Him we must go if we would learn what our attitude towards the cross and suffering should be. While the saints teach us much in the matter of living both by their lives and precepts, still they are only to be followed in so far as they are mirrors of Christ our Lord. Our Lord, too, while accomplishing our Redemption, is at the same time teaching us how to live. He is giving us then a specimen of His Divine Leadership.

Strange as it may seem, Our Lord devoted only a few years of His life to the active apostolate. To some this will always seem strange since he certainly had in an eminent degree all the qualities that make up an active apostle.

On the other hand his entire life was devoted to the Apostolate of Suffering. Christ during His entire life here below was in the state of a victim. His soul, the altar on which His victim life was consummated, was ever more or

less weighed down by the cross. Why, indeed, did He want to live such a life of immolation? It was because of His great love of His Father which made Him desire ardently to prove this love of His by great sacrifices.

Here in outline fashion will be sketched some of the sufferings of our Divine Lord during His life on earth. There is a danger that we might forget many of His sufferings. Here will be detailed some of His sufferings which are rather often passed over while others which are well known will either be omitted or briefly mentioned.

Our Lord began His life of martyrdom at the very first moment of His conception. "Wherefore when He (Christ) cometh into the world, He saith: Sacrifice and oblation Thou wouldest not, but a body Thou hast fitted for Me. Holocausts for sin did not please Thee. Then said I: Behold I come: in the head of the book it is written of Me that I should do Thy will, O God" (Heb. 10, 5-10). Here at the very dawn of His existence our Lord sees the entire sufferings which await Him during His entire life. In spite of their number and the ignominy and agony which these sufferings will involve, Christ makes His act of acceptance with undaunted generosity.

Right at the very dawn of His life Christ experiences the lot of suffering, the lot of a life of immolation and abasement, for at that very moment He "who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal to God, emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man. He humbled Himself, being obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross" (Phil. 2, 6-8).

After nine months of a hidden life in the virginal bosom of Mary He is to be born into this world. "Shall His birth be heralded as would befit the King of Kings? . . . To think so, would be to misunderstand completely the Divine Plan . . . Possessing in Himself all the treasures of heaven and earth, the Son of God might indeed have been born to the purple of royalty. But knowing that

riches are a stumbling block in the way of holiness, He chooses to be born in the most abject poverty. For Him and His holy Mother there is no room in the inn, no place among men for the Lord of the world! He shall be born in a cave. His cradle shall be a manger; His tender Body shall rest on a bit of straw" (Tanquery-Arand, *Doctrine and Devotion*, pp. 244-245). Indeed, "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not" (John, 1, 11).

Born amidst poverty and suffering which He bravely and wholeheartedly accepts, after eight days He will begin to shed His Blood. Forty days after His birth He will offer Himself as a Victim to His Father in the Temple for the salvation of souls, realizing at the same time that many will answer this generosity of His by ingratitude, hatred, and finally in some cases by the loss of their souls. Not long after this He is forced to fly into Egypt and live there as a victim of exile. There He must have experienced the trials coming from a life among strangers. His life of persecution has already begun.

Returning after Herod's death to Nazareth He lives there a victim-life of obedience, poverty, work, and obscurity. His long life there is summed up beautifully by St. Luke in these few words: "He was subject to them" (Luke, 2, 51). From His hidden life at Nazareth we learn the value of humble submission to God in small things, the value of faithful performance of our duties of state, the importance of pleasing God in all things, of bearing generously all the vexations, sufferings, and humiliations of our daily life.

His public life finally comes. Here also He is the "Man of Sorrows." He could have easily captivated the chief priests and Pharisees by some brilliant stroke had He wanted to. But such was not the Divine Plan. He would rather try to win men by lowlier means. Thus the cross would play an important part in His public life.

He was to experience in His public life a series of rejections by various classes of people. His first rejection

came from His own town folk of Nazareth. Returning from Jerusalem to Nazareth He was asked to comment on the following passage of Isaias in the town synagogue: "The spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because the Lord hath anointed me . . ." (Isaias, 41, 1). Folding the scroll and giving it to the minister, He said, "This day is fulfilled this scripture in your ears" (Luke, 4, 21). These words first made a deep impression on his listeners, but not for long. He soon became unpopular with the town-folk because among other things He refused to work miracles as He had elsewhere. In a clever way, however, and by implication they were informed that he worked no miracles for them because of their lack of faith and confidence in Him. They quickly caught on and in the midst of their anger, they seized Him and took him to the brow of the hill whereon Nazareth was built, to cast him down headlong. But as His hour had not come He passed through their midst never to return to Nazareth again.

Imagine how the Heart of Christ must have felt this blow from His fellowmen whom He loved tenderly! He had come to His own and they received Him not.

A trial too at Capharnaum awaited our Blessed Lord. There a year before the Last Supper He promised to institute the Holy Eucharist. He told His followers that He would give them His Flesh to eat and His Blood to drink that they might live forever and abide in Him. They refused to understand Him in the sense He meant and many of His disciples walked no more with Him. Again what a disappointment this must have been to Christ, especially when He was trying to prove the heights of His love?

Even His own Apostles would be unfaithful and very disappointing to Him! He had tried all along to stress the fact that His kingdom was a spiritual one wherein the poor, the afflicted, the persecuted, the meek, the merciful, and the pure of heart might enter. In His sermon on the Mount He had clearly elaborated His program of life. Yet down to the very day of the Ascension they were hop-

ing that He would restore the kingdom of Israel and that they might have first place therein. In fact James and John went so far as to ask our Lord through their mother that He place them, one on His right side and one on His left side in His kingdom.

When the other apostles found out at the last Supper that Peter would deny our Lord, immediately they became solicitous about who would take Peter's place. Of course, of all the sorrows He suffered on account of them, the betrayal and suicide of Judas must have been one of the greatest.

Here we have traced a few examples from many which might have been brought forward to show how our Lord had to suffer from the slowness, ambitions, worldly desires, and misconceptions of the apostles. One miracle of grace which He might have performed but which He preferred to let the Holy Ghost do later, could have transformed their souls. But for Him patience, humility, suffering, and the Will of His Father were His food.

The trials which our Lord endured at the hands of the chief priests, Scribes and Pharisees are known to most of us. They distrusted Him. They were jealous of Him. They stressed the minutiae in their interpretation of the Law while our Lord stressed the importance of internal dispositions. At any rate they were determined to get rid of Him. Before they did they counteracted His influence by sending someone who would heckle and thwart Him. They put a bad interpretation on all the good things He did. They said His miracles were the works not of God. They tried in every way to ensnare and trap Him and force Him to contradict Himself.

Their efforts alienated the people from Christ. First, the Jews, and then the Galileans, at least in part, deserted Him. As a result He was forced during a considerable part of His third year of ministry to preach beyond the Jordan, and even there they sent emissaries who followed Him from town to town. They finally would not be satis-

fied until they put Him to death. It was then merely a question of getting rid of Him by whatever means as soon as possible.

The sorrows and sufferings which our Lord experienced from this meanness of theirs are brought home when He looked over Jerusalem and said: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often I would have gathered together thy children, as the hen doth gather her children under her wing and thou wouldest not" (Matt. 23, 37).

Christ's public life, then, was surely a long martyrdom and one which was to end in His bitter Passion and Death. Here we have passed over the long nights He spent in prayer after the labor of the day, His abject poverty, and the constant vision of His Passion whereby the shadow of the cross was always in His mind's eye.

His Passion finally comes. Since its details are known so well to all of us, we will make here only a few observations. Of course His Passion and Death are His great cross. All His other sufferings converge and derive their full meaning from them. Most likely many of us fail to appreciate the greatness of Christ's mental sufferings during His Passion. In the garden His mental sufferings make Him sweat blood and it was apparently some mental torture that made Him cry out on the cross His words of abandonment: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me" (Mark, 15, 34; Matt., 27, 46)?

Christ too must have keenly felt the desertion of all but a few of His friends and apostles. The physical tortures involved in the scourging, the crowning with thorns, the nailing to the cross, and the hanging on the cross, can scarcely escape us. We ought not, however, forget the utter humiliation, disgrace, and ignominy involved in such scenes of the Passion as Christ's appearance before Herod and in the midst of the wild mob, or His disgraceful death upon the cross which was considered worthy only of an outcast.

When our Lord closed His eyes on the cross and died, He had consummated a long and bitter martyrdom. His was a life of constant abnegation. Why? Because He did at all times not His own, but His Father's Will.

St. Thomas tells us that Christ endured every kind of suffering to which we in this world are subjected. He further tells us that the sufferings of Christ exceeded anything known in this world. Christ's Body on account of its unusual delicacy of feeling and sensibility, was attuned to register all sufferings. Then before His mind were ever the sins of the whole human race. These He must expiate. Likewise He saw the Holiness of His Father which was so opposed to sin, the bitter recollection of all the details of His Passion and Death and the ingratitude and indifference of men towards the Holy Eucharist, the memorial of His Passion and Death.

It is said that "love seeks likeness." Is not the law of love the law of imitation and likeness? Thus when a lover sees his beloved suffering, the first impulse is to help the suffering one, to share in the suffering, or even to make suffering his choice that he might be like his beloved. This is especially true if he knows that his loved one would desire that he share in the suffering.

Now we know that Christ, our Lover Divine, desires that we pattern our life after His life of the cross. Familiar scripture texts heard repeatedly undoubtedly prove this. "If any man will come after Me let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily" (Luke, 9, 23). "Whosoever doth not carry his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple" (Luke, 14, 27).

But besides this, we know that our Lord wants us to cooperate with Him in His great mission, our redemption, by bearing suffering and the cross. If we are attached to Him and love Him, how can we refuse to give this co-operation, how can we refuse the cross of suffering? Rather if we love Him ardently, we will be thrilled at the idea and look at it as a grand opportunity.

And in this very carrying of the cross He has led the way. He is our Divine Model, He is the Divine Pattern whose life of suffering we look to that we might fashion ours accordingly. If we doubt this, then let us turn to St. Paul and be convinced. St. Paul will ever remain down the centuries as one of the greatest apostles of suffering and the cross. His ideal was to know only "Christ and Him crucified" and to "bear in his body the marks of Christ."

Is it strange then, that those who have most loved our Lord, wanted by preference to suffer? With St. John of the Cross it was: "to suffer and to be despised for You." For St. Margaret Mary "the cross (was) . . . a precious treasure of which we must take the greatest care lest we be robbed of it," and she counted "every moment lost which brought no suffering." St. Magdalene of Pazzi desired "not to die, but to suffer."

The saints with their great faith and deep supernatural knowledge of the grandeur of suffering, desired and embraced the cross with all the energy of their being and the only check on many of them here was the divine law of self-preservation. Some of them asked for suffering from God with the most ardent entreaties.

May our Lord, our Divine Exemplar, be our great Inspiration, Guide, and Leader in our Apostolate of Suffering, for with Him leading the way, we shall not walk in darkness, but we shall always shine forth as true and loyal apostles of the cross.

OTHER MOTIVES FOR BEARING  
SUFFERING AND THE CROSS

IT HAS been our set purpose to bring out the apostolic side of suffering and the cross, and this, too, in so far as our sufferings and crosses helped the salvation of others. No stress was placed on personal motives for bearing the cross. Still these personal motives are helpful, and just as in other things, so also in the spiritual life, we need variety. One or other motives at times will fail to appeal to us. Thus it is well to have other motives at hand.

Other motives which might be singled out are 1) keeping spiritually fit, 2) atonement for personal sin, 3) obtaining some special grace, 4) living a higher life, 5) conforming ourselves to Christ crucified.

*Spiritual fitness:* We all experience within ourselves the two laws which St. Paul eloquently speaks of when he said: "I see another law in my members fighting against the law of my mind" (Rom. 7, 23). We long to live according to high ideals, still something seems to keep us back and it seems so strong at times that it nearly prostrates us. How often we experience what the poet said: "I see and approve the better things, but follow the worse." Of course we all know that to yield consistently to our lower selves is to open the way to spiritual mediocrity and, perhaps, to complete spiritual failure and ruin. Thus it is a question of consistently maintaining self-mastery and self-control over our passions and keeping the lower part of our soul subject to the higher.

Adam's sin in Paradise is the root of trouble, for before that sin there was a complete harmony between our lower and higher faculties. Original sin broke that harmony and since then our soul has been a theater of battle against our irregular tendencies.

To acquire self-mastery we must carry the cross. We cannot say: I go up to the very line marked by sin and stop. Such technique would inevitably bring spiritual ruin. We must always allow a safe measure. Let us imitate Paul, a saint and an apostle, who with some fear said: "I chastise my body and bring it to subjection, lest . . . I become a castaway" (I Cor. 9, 27).

*Atonement for sin:* We are sinners. It is only reasonable and just that we cooperate with Christ in expiating our past sins. This is reparation of justice. This is penance. Seeing our past sins and their gravity, we instinctively ought to feel a need of restoring a balance and helping to pay off our past debts. We ought to take up this task more willingly, realizing as we should that Christ has taken on Himself by far the greater part of this burden.

Let us then suffer with Christ, for by our sufferings and crosses we apply to our souls the satisfaction and merits of our Lord's Passion and Death.

*Obtaining special graces:* We have all heard about the apostles when they failed to drive out the unclean spirit. They failed because they did not make use of penance for after their failure our Lord told them that this kind of demon was only driven out by prayer and fasting. Prayer was not sufficient; it needed the extra aid of penance.

Penance joined to prayer, besides rendering it more fervent, gives a special power to our prayer. Then, too, it conditions us to say our prayers properly. It makes, in a word, for progressive prayer. It helps to detach us from the world and surely any advance in detachment means also an advance in our prayer-life. Penance joined to prayer is the outward expression of a humble and lowly soul. God can scarcely resist such a soul whom He loves for its humility and lowliness.

*The Higher Life:* The end of our life is a life of intimate union with God. Our life is for God. We are for Him, not He for us, although if we live for Him, He will

invariably give Himself to us. The great obstacle to this life of intimate union with God is our want of mortification—our fear of the cross. It simply strangles our higher efforts. It keeps us chained to earthly desires, pleasures, and satisfactions. Besides, it renders weak our great means of active union with our Lover Divine: prayer and the sacraments. Prayer languishes in an unmortified heart. Prayer has an enfeebled existence in the heart of one who is ever seeking sense-gratification. With our prayer-life enfeebled, the action of the sacraments is much impeded.

Love of God is our life, the end of our life. But if it has rivals in us, the love of this world, as the love of our own ease, comfort, will and sense-life, then it cannot grow strong in us, for this earthly love holds us down. A life of the cross breaks these earthly bonds and makes us free. All earthly attachments, let us never forget, are enslavements. The cross is a way to freedom from these enslavements. The cross is a plea for liberty. A small enslavement to some attachment can do much harm. "Does it make any difference," writes St. John of the Cross, "whether a bird be held by a slender thread or a rope? While the bird is bound it cannot fly till the cord that holds it is broken" (*Ascent*, bk. I, ch. 1). Thus a small attachment can keep us from an intimate love of God.

Let us imitate then the saints in bearing the cross. Let us imitate their lives of self-conquest and suffering.

This bearing of the cross is a common note among the saints, differ as they might in other ways. It is indicative of the cross and mortification for high sanctity.

*Imitation of Christ:* The law of love is the law of assimilation and imitation. It operates first by eradicating faults and things offensive to the one loved. Then it goes further and strives to imitate the loved one. Thus all real lovers of Christ have desired to have just what He had. They wanted to be like the poor, reviled, humble, and suffering Christ, their Lover Divine. Only then would there be on their part assimilation, an imitation, a sharing and a

mutual life. Briefly, "those that really love are drawn naturally to desire to enter into the trials and sorrows, to sympathize with, and even to share, the sufferings of the person loved" (Kearney, *Learn of Me*, p. 199).

Christ, our Lord, is God's Masterpiece of manhood. God wants all His other sons and daughters to fashion their lives according to this divine Pattern. It is a matter, then, of our love of God to be wholly taken up with Christ, to fashion our lives entirely after His. And after all, is it not really a rather instinctive thing to do when we once realize how Christ has loved us and what He has meant to us? To great souls Christ became their all, and the dominant figure of their life. He was their norm of living. Since His life was a life of the cross and suffering, by imitating His life, their lives became devoted to the cross and suffering.

Besides these pressing motives for bearing the cross there are others which we will briefly mention here.

In the cross is found an excellent means of glorifying God by an act of love of the most sublime heroism. To dedicate ourselves to suffering, to repair God's outraged Majesty and His unrequited Love—what a sublime duty and what magnificent image and shining manifestation of God's own Divine Perfection such as His Goodness and Generosity!

In the cross of pain, too, is a grand way of glorifying our Lord Jesus Christ, our great Leader, Model, and Source of strength. It is a proof of our tender and deep love of Him. How this embracing of the cross must please His sacred Heart! How closely this life of the cross must unite us to Him and open for us the treasure of His Heart!

A love for the cross gives us great facility, power, and ease in practicing the various virtues so hard for many. This is largely because of the great graces which the cross and suffering win for us and which form the main part of our power here.

What a power-house for apostolic labors a love of the cross makes us through the blessings which God places

on our works! In fact the great hindrance to real apostolic zeal and self-forgetfulness in apostolic work is a love of one's comfort or honor and a fear of suffering. Nothing on the other hand, will stop a soul that loves and esteems the cross. It is not strange, then, that all the great apostles have been also great lovers of the cross, great lovers of the Apostolate of Suffering.

Finally, for the true lover of the cross a great treasure of heavenly merits is amassed. Its life practically forms an endless chain of heroic acts of pure love of God and all along its sanctity is correspondingly growing. What a high place in heaven must await such a soul! Even in this life many such generous souls experience a faint thrill of the joys of heaven due to their generous and unreserved love of God.

The Apostolate of Suffering and the Cross, then, is eminently worthwhile on all scores. It is a quick way to high sanctity. It makes possible the highest type of love—sacrificial love. Now nothing remains but to live it. Live it then, and in a short time you will understand that it is the true wisdom of God.

THE MAINSPRING OF THE APOSTOLATE  
OF SUFFERING—LOVE

**A**NYONE who really loves another intensely, will always instinctively desire to help the other in the midst of the latter's work or sorrow. That simply is an innate law of love which is found in all people. It is not a studied thing, but something very spontaneous. Nor does the person showing such love, try to give the impression that he or she is undergoing suffering or the cross. Quite the contrary. True lovers cannot do enough for each other and thus their love, enthusiasm, and instinctive attachment for the other make them forget their sacrifices as well as try to belittle them. Well said are the following words: "Since love will enter wholly into what is for it desire and fulfilment, love lives by surrender and has therein its measure, its greatness and strength, eternity and bliss. Self-surrender, sacrifice, is the mystery of love. Its desire must be fulfilled in self-surrender and sacrifice, therein it lives; ever anew and immeasurably enkindling its strength, therein it enters into its heaven, since it becomes one with what is its longing" (Messner, *Man's Suffering and God's Love*, pp. 52-53).

If human love will do this and we know it will, what should not a burning divine love do? Where will be its limits? For here God, our Love Divine, the One Who is being loved, is infinitely more loving and infinitely more lovable than any human heart.

It is not strange, then, that the great saints, who were the greatest lovers, lived lives of heroic self-effacement, self-surrender, and suffering—the genuine expression of their deep love. For them there was a joy in the midst of such suffering. Fr. William Doyle, S.J. sometimes had such

a burning intoxication of love that he had to ease it by the cross of pain.

Thus those who love God ardently, are often thrilled and bubbling over in enthusiasm and joy in suffering for Him Whom they love. This enthusiasm, joy, and happiness is catching, for they not only radiate these about themselves, but they beget these qualities in others.

True, others cannot understand how some can ever be so happy, so enthusiastic, so constantly good-spirited in the midst of a life of self-effacement, suffering, and the cross. The secret is LOVE. Love makes hard things easy. Why is this?

It is because one who loves ardently is so taken up with God, His cause, and His interests, that he forgets himself. His whole heart and his whole being are absorbed in God and His interests. Having reached the source of all and Love itself, it is not strange that this fortunate soul instinctively does everything, whether easy or hard, with a joyful, enthusiastic and bubbling-over spirit. In fact this soul experiences a real thrill in presenting little and big sacrifices, which for it are so many acts of love, to God. True, most likely this love is an effect of a special gift of the Holy Spirit. The ideal for us is to strive for this higher gift.

True love makes us desire to know and carry out the will of another. Thus if we really love our dear Lord, we will seek to cooperate and further as fully as possible all His desires, plans, and projects.

Right here we see how love is the mainspring of the Apostolate of Suffering. We know that Christ desires that we cooperate with Him in saving souls by bearing among other things sufferings and crosses. If we really love Him then, we cannot be indifferent to this great Mission of His, our Redemption. Our deep love for Him will make it impossible for us to remain idle here. True if our love for Him is not strong, it is very likely that this Apostolate of Suffering will not appeal to us. It is simply too hard

and only deep love can cope with its hardships and difficulties.

An ardent love of souls whom our Lord loves so dearly, will make us true apostles of the cross; for how could we fail to love the interests of those souls when these interests are so near to the heart of our Lover Divine? Can one really love another and be indifferent towards the latter's children? Thus after we have become apostles of suffering out of love of God or Christ crucified, we will feel inclined to embrace it, too, for love of souls who are so dear to the Blessed Trinity.

In the light of these remarks we can understand at least faintly the love that the saints had for suffering, the cross, and austerities. They must, as it were, give vent to pent-up love. They realize only too well that love consists in unreserved self-giving and self-surrender, and that suffering and the cross are the food of love—the nourishment of love.

If at any time the saints seemed foolish in their austerities, remember that they were intoxicated with love, and love which must have an outlet, sometimes knows no limits. The saints were briefly, lovers, the greatest of human lovers. Using this passion of love for divine things they accomplished the seemingly impossible.

Let each one of us in imitation of these saintly giants, be a lover and a spiritual enthusiast. The mainspring and the secret of the Apostolate of Suffering is LOVE. Be then on fire with Love of God, with love of Christ, with love of souls. Then you will be a great devotee of the Apostolate of Suffering, and being a devotee of the Apostolate of Suffering, you will further grow in love of God, the end of your life. In a word, then, LOVE GOD WITH YOUR ALL, BE AN ARDENT LOVER OF HIM.

(THE END)

SOME SELECT BOOKS ON THE SUBJECT MATTER  
OF THIS BOOK

De Jaegher, *One With Jesus*.

De Smedt, *Notre vie surnaturelle* (especially t. 2, pp. 223 sq.).

Giloteaux, *Victim Souls*.

Grimaud-Newcomb:

*My Mass* (especially pp. 42-45).

*One Only Christ* (especially pp. 159-169).

Jurgensmeier, *The Mystical Body of Christ*.

Kearney, *Learn of Me*.

Kreuter, *The Guide for Victim Souls*.

Leen, *The True Vine and Its Branches*.

Lyonnard, *L'apostolat de la souffrance* (a classic on the subject).

Mersch, *The Whole Christ* (especially sections on St. Paul and St. John).

McMenamy, *Manuscript Retreat Notes*.

Messner, *Man's Suffering and God's Love*.

Plus, *Christ in His Brethren*.

*Folly of the Cross*.

*Ideal of Reparation*.

*Progress in Divine Union* (especially chapter 4).  
*Reparation*.

Putz, *My Mass*.

Schmid, *Les ames victimes*.

Tanquerey-Arand, *Doctrine and Devotion*.