



*Serving the Spiritual Needs of Grieving Parents
Whose Children of Any Age Have Died by Any Cause,
No Matter How Long Ago*

**Your Emmaus Ministry
Remote Retreat Guide
August 1, 2020
9:30am EDT**

SUFFERING

“Lord, help me to have good come out of all of this suffering.”



Preparation:

Ahead of time, we recommend you find a quiet place in your home where you can immerse yourself in this retreat. Have your child's Emmaus Memorial Candle (or other candle) available along with a lighter or matches.

Take several deep breaths to cleanse your thoughts and open yourself to wherever the Holy Spirit is calling you today several minutes before the retreat is scheduled to begin.

At 9:30am EDT open your email and join other fellow Emmaus Parent Companions in getting away from the rest of the world, at least for a time, to focus on God and on your precious child.

CANDLE LIGHTING PRAYER (Light your candle)

We begin... In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Amen

Lord, you are the Light of the World. *Help us feel your presence in the lighting of this candle.*

Lord, you gave us the gift of our children. *Help us feel their presence in the lighting of this candle.*

Lord, you gave us the hope of eternal life. *Help us confirm that hope in the lighting of this candle.*

Lord, you gave us love. *Help us to know that, as much as we love our children, you love them even more.*

We ask you this through Christ, Our Lord
Amen.

OPENING SONG: [*My God, Why Have You Abandoned Me?*](#) by Lee Ann Vermeulen-Roberts

PRAYER OF THOSE MAKING A RETREAT

Loving Spirit of Wisdom,
Guide my thoughts and my memories.

In the light of your love,
May I see what is important for me to remember,
What is important for me to hold to my heart,
And what I need to simply let go of in peace.

I trust you to be my guide,
Even when the path seems unclear to me.

We pray this in the name of Your Son, the Healer,
Our Lord, Jesus Christ.
Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING

Psalm 22

My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?
Why so far from my call for help, from my cries of anguish?

My God, I call by day, but you do not answer; by night, but I have no relief.
Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One; you are the glory of Israel.
In you our fathers trusted; they trusted and you rescued them.
To you they cried out and they escaped; in you they trusted and were not disappointed.

But I am a worm, not a man, scorned by men, despised by the people.
All who see me mock me; they curl their lips and jeer; they shake their heads at me:
“He relied on the LORD—let him deliver him; if he loves him, let him rescue him.”

For you drew me forth from the womb, made me safe at my mother’s breasts.
Upon you I was thrust from the womb; since my mother bore me, you are my God.
Do not stay far from me, for trouble is near, and there is no one to help.

Many bulls surround me; fierce bulls of Bashan encircle me. They open their mouths against me, lions
that rend and roar. Like water my life drains away; all my bones are disjointed.
My heart has become like wax, it melts away within me. As dry as a potsherd is my throat; my tongue
cleaves to my palate; you lay me in the dust of death.

Dogs surround me; a pack of evildoers closes in on me. They have pierced my hands and my feet. I
can count all my bones.
They stare at me and gloat; they divide my garments among them; for my clothing they cast lots.
But you, LORD, do not stay far off; my strength, come quickly to help me.

Deliver my soul from the sword, my life from the grip of the dogs.
Save me from the lion’s mouth, my poor life from the horns of wild bulls.
Then I will proclaim your name to my brethren; in the assembly I will praise you:

“You who fear the LORD, give praise! All descendants of Jacob, give honor; show reverence, all
descendants of Israel!
For he has not spurned or disdained the misery of this poor wretch, Did not turn away from me, but
heard me when I cried out. I will offer praise in the great assembly; my vows I will fulfill before those
who fear him.

The poor will eat their fill; those who seek the LORD will offer praise. May your hearts enjoy life
forever!”
All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD;
All the families of nations will bow low before him. For kingship belongs to the LORD, the ruler over
the nations. All who sleep in the earth will bow low before God; All who have gone down into the
dust will kneel in homage.

And I will live for the LORD; my descendants will serve you.
The generation to come will be told of the Lord, that they may proclaim to a people yet unborn the deliverance you have brought.

REFLECTION #1: Can Our Suffering Actually Help Our Children?

Rejoice in Our Suffering by Bishop Robert Barron

St. Paul reflected often on suffering. In his letter to the Colossians, the apostle says, “Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ” (Colossians 1:24).

In his letters, Paul frequently attests to his great suffering. He was beaten, shipwrecked, imprisoned many times, rejected by his own people, and he suffered under the weight of some ailment—physical or psychological, we don’t really know—for the whole of his life. Finally, of course, he was put to death. He was a man who knew about pain.

But here he tells us that he rejoices in his sufferings because, somehow, they are joined to the sufferings of Christ.

How do we understand this? Well, Christ saved us through an act of suffering. He died for us on the cross, bearing in his own person the weight of our sin. On the cross, suffering and love coincided. And when you think of it, every act of love involves suffering, since love always involves bearing the burden of another.

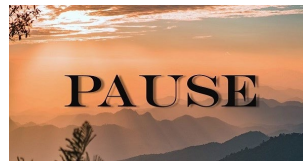
Now in Paul’s vision, the Church is not a society or a collectivity of like-minded people. Rather, it is a body, made up of interdependent cells, molecules, and organs. We don’t just follow Christ or admire him; we participate in him. Baptism involves just this dynamic of identification and participation.

Therefore, we shouldn’t be surprised that we will be called upon to suffer. We have been given the privilege of carrying on Christ’s work in the world in just this way.

Charles Williams speaks of the principle of co-inherence as key to Catholicism. This is the idea that we are connected to one another much as the organs and systems of a living body are connected.

Thus, just as one system can take up the work of another, or one organ the burden of another that is ailing, so can one member of the body of Christ bear the burden of another.

In accord with Paul’s master idea, we can consciously offer our suffering—physical, spiritual, psychological—to Christ in order that he might use it, in his own mysterious manner, to benefit someone else. Christ allows us to minister to others through our pain.



Take a moment to pause... breathe... savor what you have received from the Reflection #1.

Clear your mind before focusing on Reflection #2.

REFLECTION #2: [If God is Merciful, Why is There Suffering?](#) by Fr. Chris Alar of Ascension Presents

Lord, you are Holy above all others, and all of the strength that I need is in your hands.

I am not asking, Lord, that you take this trial away. Instead, I simply ask that Your will be done in my life. Whatever that means, that is what I want.

But I admit that it's hard, Lord.

Sometimes I feel like I can't go on. The pain and the fear are too much for me, and I know that I don't have the strength on my own to get through this.

I know that I can come to you, Jesus, and that you will hear my prayer. I know that it is not your intent to bring me to this point just to leave me in the wilderness alone.

Please, Lord, give me the strength that I need to face today. I don't have to worry about tomorrow.

If you just give me the strength that I need today that is all I need.

Keep me from sinning during this trial. Instead, help me to keep my eyes on you.

You are the Holy Lord, and all of my hope rests in you.

Thank you for hearing my prayer.

In Jesus' name.

Amen

CLOSING SONG: [Christ Be Our Light](#)

Shine through the darkness.

CLOSING BLESSING

Let us end our time of retreat...united with Brother John Maganzini, OFM and the Franciscan Friars at Saint Anthony Shrine in Boston, MA, by blessing one another.

Raise your right hand and, together, let us pray...

God of consolation,
Blessing

God of Consolation,

May you...

give us the strength and will to bear our heavy
burdens, until we can again feel the warmth and love of Your divine compassion.

May you...

have mercy on us while we struggle to comprehend life's hardships.

And May you...

Keep us ever in Your watch, til we can walk again with light hearts and renewed spirits.

Grant this through Christ our Lord.

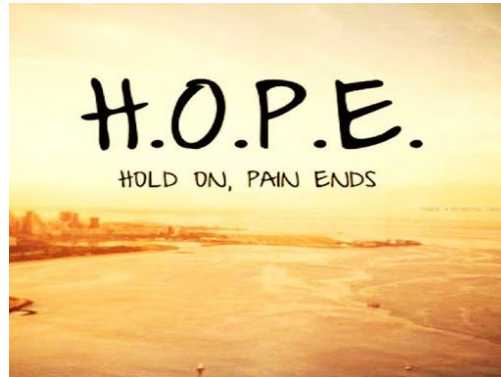
In the name of the Father, Your Son, and Holy Spirit,
Amen.



REFLECTION...

[Where is the Meaning Of Suffering Found?](#) by Joanne Spisso Snader

[Why Does God Let Us Suffer?](#) by Chris Stefanick



You will receive a new Emmaus Remote Retreat email next Friday.

Please join your fellow Emmaus Parent Companions again next Saturday at 9:30am EDT

Until then, may God bless you and keep you. Sending many warm, virtual hugs

For past Remote Retreats, see [here](#).

REMINDER

We have concluded our Emmaus Ministry LIVE Virtual Gathering Series. If you were not able to join us for our Reflections --or would like to see them again-- you can access these inspiring talks [here](#).



