



Week Leading up to 10.4.20: Can Suffering Have Purpose?

***{Start with reviewing the previous Meetings Challenge or discuss prior to sharing this week's challenge.}**

Let's Begin: Think about how the challenge went for the last session. What went well? What was difficult?

Opening Prayer:

Begin with a brief moment of silence shaking off any and all distractions or difficulties of the day and remembering that God is always with us.

Read: MT 21:33-43

After the Reading Conclude with this prayer:

Dear Jesus, We turn to You today in great gratitude for Your sacrificial love. Help us to lean on You rather than turn from You in our suffering. Holy Spirit, we ask for You to strengthen us for our fight against evil and shower us with Your gifts that we may live virtuous lives. Amen.

Reflection or Discussion Question:

1. Do you think it's unfair or cruel that God allows the servants and Son of the vineyard landowner to be killed?

YouTube Video: Why God Allows Us to Go Through Hard Times – Fr. Mark Mary (7:05)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V7hFqTEa5D4&feature=youtu.be>

Reflection or Discussion Questions:

2. Do you find it difficult to know when to coddle others vs console them?
3. What do you think the world would look like if God coddled us? Would you be a different person? Do you think/feel you could truly love?
4. Fr. Mark Mary explains how God doesn't treat us below our dignity. What does dignity mean to you?
5. Fr. Mark Mary explains that to comfort means to give strength. Have you ever thought of comforting as "giving strength" before?
6. Fr. Mark Mary explains that God gives us His own strength through the Holy Spirit and through the Holy Spirit He enters and participates in our difficulty. Have you ever felt God's comfort in this way? How so?
7. Have you ever felt called to live heroically as a result of suffering? Did it change you in any way?

Session Challenges: {Choose one or all}

- Just as Jesus willingly suffered for us by giving His life, perform one sacrificial act daily for someone else.
- If you know someone is suffering right now, reach out to them and simply offer comfort through a listening ear.

Closing Prayer: (Leaders: We recommended offering time during the closing prayer for participants to offer personal intentions.)

Dear Loving Father, we humbly thank You for loving us so dearly that You call us into a higher understanding of our dignity. Only You can fully understand what we really need and the full meaning of suffering. Help us to always remember that You desire to comfort us and that we can turn to You for Your strength. Holy Spirit, we especially turn to You today. Please shower us with Your gifts and, most especially, Your strength. Open our hearts in great vulnerability as we take a moment to ponder our brokenness and pain. (pause) Let us now take a moment to share out loud our personal intentions for ourselves and others in our lives that may be suffering. (pause) Dear Loving Father, we lift all of these intentions and those left unsaid to You. We desire for You to walk with us more closely through our pain and burdens. We ask to be surrounded by Your healing power and never let us forget Your Love for us. In Your Name. Amen

{Optional additional Readings}

Sunday Reading 1: IS 5:1-7 Sunday Reading 2: PHIL 4:6-9