

Take 20

A Soul Care Resource

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Take 20 is designed to be used for about 20 minutes of prayer and reflection. It is a collection of quotes, Scriptures, and hymns related to a specific theme. At the end an opportunity is given to practice *lectio divina* (“sacred reading”).

From the Editor

“Behold, the wood of the cross, on which is hung our salvation. Oh come, let us adore.” Our Good Friday liturgy begins with this haunting, yet beautiful chant. As we go forward to venerate the cross, the stark reality of Jesus’ suffering greets us in a tangible, almost irresistible way. The Cross, His Cross, is where love and mercy flow down upon us. His willingness to die for us, to undergo an unspeakably torturous death, strengthens and propels us, as it were, to accept and bear the cross that He asks us to carry—our own sufferings. Ours, added to His—ours, given meaning and purpose because of His.



Suffering

Suffering is a great grace; through suffering the soul becomes like the Savior; in suffering love becomes crystallized; the greater the suffering, the purer the love.

—St. Faustina



The road is narrow. He who wishes to travel it more easily must cast off all things and use the cross as his cane. In other words, he must be truly resolved to suffer willingly for the love of God in all things.

—St. John of the Cross

Suffering is a great favor. Remember that everything soon comes to an end . . . and take courage. Think of how our gain is eternal.

—St. Teresa of Avila

Pain and suffering have come into your life, but remember pain, sorrow, suffering are but the kiss of Jesus — a sign that you have come so close to Him that He can kiss you.”

—St. Teresa of Calcutta

Suffering in itself is an evil and cannot be agreeable; if Jesus willed to embrace it in all its plenitude and if He offers it to us, inviting us to esteem and love it, it is only in view of a superior good which cannot be attained by any other means—the sublime good of the redemption and the sanctification of our souls.

—Father Gabriel of St Mary Magdalen, O.C.D.

And the Lord said to me, “My child, you please Me most by suffering. In your physical as well as your mental sufferings, My daughter, do not seek sympathy from creatures. I want the fragrance of your suffering to be pure and unadulterated. I want you to detach yourself, not only from creatures, but also from yourself...The more you will come to love suffering, My daughter, the purer your love for Me will be”.

—St. Faustina

If God gives you an abundant harvest of trials, it is a sign of great holiness which He desires you to attain. Do you want to become a great saint? Ask God to send you many sufferings. The flame of Divine Love never rises higher than when fed with the wood of the Cross, which the infinite charity of the Savior used to finish His sacrifice. All the pleasures of the world are nothing compared with the sweetness found in the gall and vinegar offered to Jesus Christ. That is, hard and painful things endured for Jesus Christ and with Jesus Christ.

—St. Ignatius of Loyola

I [Paul] consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. Romans 8:18

To suffer means to become particularly susceptible, particularly open to the working of the salvific powers of God, offered to humanity in Christ. In him God has confirmed his desire to act especially through suffering, which is man’s weakness and emptying of self, and he wishes to make his power known precisely in this weakness and emptying of self.

—St. John Paul II, *Salvifici Doloris* 23

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Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed.

...let those suffering in accordance with God's will entrust themselves to a faithful Creator, while continuing to do good.

—1 Peter 4:12-13; 19

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So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal.

—2 Corinthians 4:16-18

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For [God] has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well.

—Philippians 1:29

All Scripture quotations are from the NRSV Catholic Edition.

## When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

Isaac Watts, 1707

When I survey the wondrous cross  
On which the Prince of glory died,  
My richest gain I count but loss,  
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,  
Save in the death of Christ my God!  
All the vain things that charm me most,  
I sacrifice them to His blood.

See from His head, His hands, His feet,  
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!  
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,  
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were a present far too small;  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

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Please take one of the Scriptures in the sidebar and pray, using the following steps to guide your time with the Lord:

### Four Stages of *Lectio Divina*

1. **Read** — Read the verses slowly and prayerfully several times (out loud if possible), savoring the words and letting them sink in. Write down any words or phrases that seem to stand out.
2. **Meditate** — Now begin to think about the words or phrases that stood out to you. Come in faith with the expectation that the Lord will speak to you. Ask him a question such as “What does this mean?” to help you reflect more deeply. You may also think about the passage through the eyes of the author or someone mentioned in the verses. Write down any insights that God gives you.
3. **Pray** — Prayer is a two-way conversation with the Lord. Respond from your heart to what he has been revealing to you in his Word, especially taking time to listen to what he may be saying to you personally. You may want to write out your prayer to God and anything he says to you.
4. **Contemplate** — At any time, when you begin to sense the presence of the Lord, stop any mental effort you are making and just rest in and enjoy his presence. This is the time to savor the special moment of connection between you and God. Treasure God's Word in your heart.