

Meditation 5b

Following Christ by “Taking up your Cross”

Review of Meditation I

Point I. Jesus miraculously healed people’s suffering to bring them faith.

- His words, which of course are the “Words of God,” were proven by miracles that cured people. The explanation Jesus gave why He performed miracles came from the Old Testament. By quoting the Scripture, which the Jews should have known, Jesus was able to give believability to His words, further proven by His miracles.
- Jesus’ method of teaching, using Scripture and confirming His words with miracles, had the effect of bringing people to see how Scripture was being fulfilled in Him.
- Recall the example of Jesus’ teaching method in the healing of the paralytic – it’s an example of how the Old Testament promised that the Messiah would be known by curing people – but then Jesus adds something more. Your sins are forgiven (Mk 2:1-12).

Point II. In Baptism we participate in Jesus’ dying and rising.

- Jesus not only chose the suffering of people to bring faith to them through healing miracles but obeyed the Father and used His own suffering and death, along with His rising from the dead, to bring us the ultimate gift of faith – salvation through baptism.
- Christ’s desire to bond with us is both sacramental and personal.

Point III. The possible good of suffering.

- Refer to the benefits listed under Point III in the 1st meditation notes.
- One of the primary goods from suffering is that suffering gives us a way to approach God, just as Jesus wanted.
- In this respect suffering is an invitation.

- Just like Jesus invites us to be in relationship with Him by having a daily schedule of prayer, He invites us to unite our suffering with His.

New Point. We must share our cross with Jesus.

- St. Paul writes to the Colossians in 1:24. He says, “Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church.” What does this mean?
 - What this **doesn’t mean** is that Christ’s death on the cross was incomplete in freeing us, redeeming us, and fully restoring us, uniting us to God.
 - St. Paul is telling the baptized Colossians and us that we have to make Jesus’ death on the cross something personal. We have to give Him our suffering.
 - That is what is “lacking” or incomplete until our suffering is shared with the Lord.
 - If everyone would do this, there would be no lacking, no incompleteness. This lacking or incompleteness is about us, not Christ. It is our failure to unite our pain and suffering with Him.
 - And for this He is pleased with us. We have taken up our cross and followed Him. We are more united with Him than before, and every cross we give Him is a further step in a closer relationship with Him.
- Analogy of the House
 - The beautiful house given to you free represents your baptism.
 - Jesus is the One Who paid for your house, your baptism, by His suffering and death.
 - Your house is not an empty shell, but one made personal by your life experiences including your joys and sufferings.
 - Jesus asks that you share not only your joys but, in particular, your unique sufferings with Him.
 - When you do this, as far as you are concerned, no longer is anything lacking from you to complete the suffering that Jesus desires for us to share with Him.
 - One of the reasons why St. Paul rejoiced in his own sufferings is the opportunity for greater intimacy with Jesus that suffering provides. We too can rejoice in our own sufferings shared with Christ for the same reason. We have heeded Jesus’ call and He rewards us with greater intimacy with Him.