

Why All People Suffer

How a loving God uses suffering to perfect us

Book by Dr Paul Chaloux

Seeing the 4 tasks in our own lives:

1. How did the suffering make me a better person? Did I grow in virtue?
2. Did it draw me closer to God?
3. Did I feel loved through it? Was love unleashed b/c of the suffering?
4. Was I able to offer up the suffering and unite it with Jesus' suffering on the Cross?

Divine Providence

“The most important question that people have when they experience suffering and evil is what is God’s goal for mankind in general and for themselves personally.”

God wants us to be like Him so we can share eternal life with Him.

Talking more about evil

- ** Evil does not oppose good, it is the absence of good.
- ** Because evil is the privation of good it can be resolved with attaining the lacking good.
- ** The only evil that has lasting negative effect is sin, which is the loss of union with God.

God uses evil and suffering
to direct, protect and
perfect us

Physical evil as an opportunity for growth

What do we mean by physical evil?

Earthquakes, tornadoes , tsunamis, volcanoes,
hurricanes, blizzards, floods, droughts, cliffs,
undertows, quicksand

Hard to accept that physical evil is for the
benefit of humanity:

Some people will argue that physical evil is the works
of a punitive God

Others will argue that people are incidental to the
bigger picture of the ever changing universe

Physical evils are opportunities to demonstrate stewardship consistent with the nature of God.

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Natural evil in a contingent world

What is natural evil?

Loss of human function, or threats to human existence that are related to nature, matter of the universe.

These are: disability, injury, illness, death

Natural evils are a key component of God's plan of redemption, bc by potentially leading to death they serve as standing reminders that we have choices in front of us.

Suffering, conscience and the evil of sin

“Dr Paul reminds us that St Thomas taught that God is rational and thus wills things toward an end, which is his own goodness.” page 137

St Thomas says: “In no way does he will the evil of sin, which is the privation of right order toward the divine good.” ST I q.19 art 9

The evil of sin is different from physical and natural evil

1. It is an act of man, not God
2. Sin is highlighted and resisted through conscience more than suffering

Being the victim of sin can be beneficial

Eternal life is the goal for which temporal suffering can be accepted.

Divine Action

God is active in each of our lives, in the *small details and big things*. He desires us to be like Him so that we can be together in eternity.

Tradition (as seen in the magisterium), the Church Fathers, and the saints show us how He uses suffering to draw us back to Him.

Theology of suffering

The purpose of Dr Paul's theology of suffering is to make Catholic moral teaching more available to all Christians by linking St John Paul II's writing on suffering to the catechism.

Salvifici doloris - Encyclical on suffering

Dr Paul wants to provide hope and solace to those who suffer, and to assure them that God loves them and is calling them to participate in his nature both in this world and the next.

Next week

Answering the Call to Share in God's Nature -

All people suffer

The Church's role

Finding Joy in Chronic Illness

Sufferers as messengers of God

Joy in finding meaning in suffering