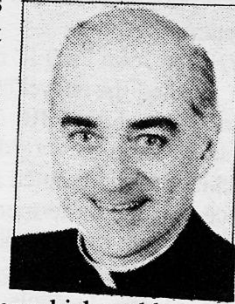


# Mystery of Suffering

Why do innocent children suffer? Why does anyone have to suffer? I wouldn't dream of trying to explain it, but this much I

know. God wants our happiness, not our suffering.

Suffering is a great mystery, and no one is entirely free of it. Even when seen in the best light, suffering is difficult to comprehend. And yet there is a spiritual vision which enables us to see the redemptive value of emotional and physical pain.



By his cross and resurrection Jesus shows us that suffering has meaning and power. According to the saints when suffering is united with the Cross of Christ it is a source of abundant blessings. The Blessed Henry Suso, a 14th century mystic, wrote the following:

“Suffering is the coin that purchased our salvation.

Suffering preserves the soul in humility and teaches patience.

Suffering takes away sin, drives away temptations.

Suffering quenches carnal desires and renews the spirit.

Suffering mortifies the body, which is destined to die anyway.

Suffering nourishes the precious soul.

Suffering guards one against grave falls.

Suffering gives a person self-knowledge.

Suffering teaches us to be compassionate toward our neighbor.

Suffering gives wisdom. A man who has not suffered, what does he know?”

According to Suso, the angels consider patience in suffering a greater work than raising the dead.

Meister Eckhart once urged his readers “To suffer God” because He wants what is best for us more earnestly than we do ourselves. God intends to give us an eternity of happiness, and He knows how to get what He wants. Though we will never fully understand the mystery of suffering, Eckhart encourages us to trust God's wisdom, especially when our senses cry out for relief.

*[For free copy of the Christopher News Note, Coping With Illness, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to The Christophers, 12 E. 48th St., New York, N.Y. 10017.]*