

Part III:
**The Role of Suffering in This Message of
Purity and Purification**

My child, nothing is accomplished without pain. Prepare to suffer much. You see the sword in the Heart of your Mother. Suffering completed the work of divine grace in my soul. He who refuses to suffer will never abide in the Spirit of Christ, will never be formed into His image. My sweet child, the Father will never recognize a soul as His own unless He sees in it the likeness of His beloved Son. Souls must attain to the perfection of the Father through the Spirit of the Son.
(Diary, pg. 23)

There is no doubt that visionaries are called to a high degree of victimhood, suffering for the sake of the mission to which they are called. God seems to abandon them so, as Jesus was, so they might be completely configured to His Passion and share deeply in His redemption of souls. He likewise humbles them so they are completely pliable in His hands and so He can fill them with His Truth without resistance, and so all will see the work, not as theirs, but as His. Sometimes the instruments of their suffering are their own family, community, those closest to them, even fellow Christians and religious. Victimhood, however, is for each of us a part of Baptism into Jesus' Paschal mystery and His mandate, if we are to follow Him, to pick up our cross daily and climb the hill to Calvary with Him, dying a thousand deaths with Him so we may rise to eternal glory with Him, too. He warns us, if they have persecuted Him, they will persecute us also. This is the Christian life, so suffering should not surprise us. Scripture also says God chastises those whom He loves, for our own good. The chosen souls are called in a pre-eminent way to this identification with Jesus' Passion and rejection by His own and His abandonment to the Father's Will. Let's look at Our Lord's own words in this regard to some of His other chosen, lowly souls.

To St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, the Apostle of the Sacred Heart, He said, **"I have chosen thee as an abyss of unworthiness and ignorance to accomplish so great a design, so that all may be done by Me."** (The Life of Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque, Rt. Rev. Emile Bougard, Tan Books, 1990, pg. 164.)

To St. Catherine of Siena who lived during the terrible days of a divided papacy within the Church, a period of such darkness when even Cardinals had their mistresses and lived pompously like kings, the Lord asked her to offer herself for the Church:

"O Eternal God, receive the sacrifice of my life in this mystical body of Holy Church! I have naught to give save what Thou hast given to me. Take then my heart, and may Thy Bride lean her face upon it." Then Eternal God, turning

upon me the eyes of His mercy, removed my heart, and offered it to Holy Church.”

St. Catherine of Siena, Maisie Ward, Sheed & Ward, 1950, pg. 39.)

In St. Faustina’s Diary, *Divine Mercy in My Soul*, she recounts the experience of being called to come up to the altar in a church, but there were crowds of people inside and out, dignitaries and common folk and family. When she approached, they all threw stones at her, even her family. When she finally arrived at the altar, they suddenly reversed behavior and came begging her for prayer. This is indicative of the persecution she went through prior to her death and sainthood but the intercession she makes for us now. It seems to be the experience of all visionaries and chosen souls, for the same has happened with Sr. Mildred, and now with Sr. Joseph Therese. There is often great spiritual animosity within the religious community, jealousy and envy of the favored one.

God calls to his special missions those whom the world would not choose. In Scripture we see Moses, Jeremiah, little David, Esther, Joseph, the Baptist, Mary and Joseph, and Jesus Himself, all such humble souls. What good can come out of Nazareth? Isn’t he the carpenter’s son? Juan Diego, Bernadette (called stupid by her religious sister), the illiterate Fatima children, St. Faustina, and now Sr. Mildred and Archbishop Leibold, Sr. Florecita and Sister Joseph Therese, are the ones the world would not choose! God generally does not choose powerful people because the temptation to pride and lust for power and glory and money and position would be too great and would undermine His work. No, He chooses the lowly, the uneducated, the simple, those guileless and generous to a fault, so trusting like the little white dove who might not even suspect someone who approaches is trying to destroy it. They are like the unblemished lamb led to the slaughter, whose blood is poured out so others might live.

In the message of Our Lady of America®, there are many similar references to persecution and rejection because of the humble state of the chosen one. **“They do not believe you because you are a little one.”**

While those of us who have worked for many years on this devotion joke about not getting involved in it unless we are prepared to suffer, it is no joke. We truly believe anyone who takes this message seriously, which Our Lady asks us to do in order to embrace a reform of life, *will be chastised by it and confronted by the darkness and evil spirits that may be hiding in the crevices and wounded places in our own hearts.* We will be purified in the refining fires of Divine Love! God indeed chastises those whom He loves. Sister Mildred gives a vivid description of Our Lord’s invitation to suffer with Him in a letter to Father Leibold on December 6, 1955:

I had awakened after a time and was about to get up when I fell into one of those trance-like conditions of which I already spoke to you about. The Crucifix appeared before me drawing closer and closer. I knelt down, my heart crying out in sorrow and love. He was very near, so near that I saw the Blood streaming down

His crucified and pain-wracked body. On His Face was a look of intense pain and sorrow. I offered myself to Him with all the love of my heart. Then He spoke these words to me: "I cannot accept your gift unless you are wholly united to Me and to My sufferings." At these words I was overwhelmed with grief. The Lord proceeded to lead me upon the road of suffering. Never, dear Father, have I ever experienced anything so terrible, so heartrending, so full of bitterness. I was filled with such anguish and agony that every part of my soul and body seemed to share in it....Oh if I could only tell you how it really was. When I awoke I was shivering and trembling all over. Oh the horror of sin, if only one fully realized it.

Anyone schooled in the spiritual life knows there are three stages in the ascent to holiness: purification, then illumination, and finally, union with God. Purification is always first. And, it never ends, because we always need more purification because sin abounds all around us.

This message has taken so long to be understood and embraced because so much purification is needed within our society and within our Church, from the top to the bottom, for at Fatima Our Lady warned that the smoke of Satan would enter even into high places within the Church. Our Church is in grave need of repair as truly today as it was in the time of St. Francis of Assisi or of St. Catherine of Siena. Our Lord addresses in this message the materialism of parents and their failure to teach their children about the next world because they never have time. He addresses our fear of man's weapons which can destroy only the body and our failure to worry enough about He who can destroy the soul. Our Lady addresses the priesthood which has been under attack for many years even before it exploded in the priest scandal. She exhorts her beloved sons to be true to the exalted state of their calling, to imitate the Eternal priesthood of her Son and to lead the flock by holiness of life, to be in the world but not of it, shunning the ways of the world to embrace lifestyles of poverty and penance. Satan is wise in his evil; strike down the shepherd and the flock is easy prey and scatters. Our Lord laments religious who have turned away from Him in favor of the world's trinkets. Our Lord made the following strong warning in 1981:

Many unnatural acts are being committed in the name of love. This evil is being disguised and tolerated as an intrinsic right like any other. Even some of my priests and consecrated virgins are being caught up into this web of evil, not realizing its terrible consequences. (Complete Diary, pg. 40)

Our Lady addresses the issue of nuclear war. She pleads with us for a reform of life, anxious about our interior lives. We have become a people of externals. She wishes to turn our hearts inward to where God dwells in the depths of our souls, to make our hearts temples, temples in flesh more than in stone. She speaks directly to disobedience to Christ's Vicar on earth and to false teachings. Her words speak clearly of the need for reform; sanctification comes from within. We must enter into the Light of Christ, for His

Light is Truth and is manifest in the 7 gifts of the Spirit and the 7 sacraments that are divine supernatural power against those 7 deadly sins.

God has a way of humbling His chosen souls. Persecution, false accusation, rejection by one's own, physical, emotional and spiritual suffering, attacks by the devil, visions of hell, and sometimes even the grace of bearing the wounds of His Passion in their own bodies with internal or external stigmata are common to them. But God loves the humble. Our Lady said to Sister Mildred, "My Son is in love with your lowliness."

Much of this message is a warning of coming chastisements if we do not reform our lives. Equally so it is a promise and a hope that the Immaculate One will triumph in the end and that through her all things will be restored, for she takes us to her Son, the only Savior, the Sacred Humanity. Many of these chastisements hitherto unknown to us in America have surely already been visited upon us for our turning away from God in our public life and denying our religious heritage and the supreme authority of God over our land. We have reversed the Natural and the Moral order and we have over-glorified human ways and the human view and the human will in place of God's Will. To this Our Lady said:

Beloved daughter, how many let human wisdom guide them through life. This is a serious mistake that will cause much suffering. Unless human wisdom is guided and saturated by Divine Wisdom, it is a helpless yet dangerous tool in human hands. Helpless because it lacks understanding and true knowledge, dangerous because it leads to wrong paths of darkness where the only light is false like a mirage in the desert. (Complete Diary, pg. 39)

So let us pray, and pray, and pray some more! By thy holy and Immaculate Conception, O Mary, deliver us from evil, every evil, and especially the evil that has attacked your message of Purity! O Queen of Angels, command St. Michael to come to our aid and pierce every human mind upon the earth with that flaming sword of Divine Truth and effect an awakening of conscience and a correction of conscience. Then further command this great Warrior to set every human heart on fire with the Flaming Torch of Divine Love and burn away every impurity of every kind and deliver us from every power of Satan and his cohort of evil doers and their darkness. Bring us into the Light of Christ and His eternal day, healing our spiritual blindness forever. Then let us see You, know You and love You, O God, with pure hearts, with all our hearts and souls. Amen. Amen.