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Message from the Spiritual Advisor

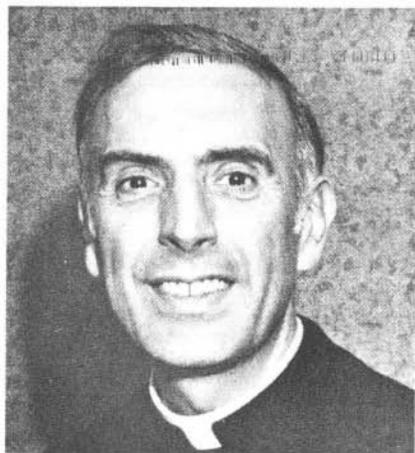
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Message from the Spiritual Advisor



SUCCESS is something most people strive for. For many, it is a dream of a "better tomorrow."

For the Christian, the ultimate in success is to be welcomed into that new home of his called Paradise and enjoy the kingdom of the Lord for all eternity. However, before this happens, each person is challenged with a "cross" of struggles and suffering in preparation for this greatest of all events. It is the belief of the faithful that all problems on this earth are certainly worthwhile if they finally result in the joy of being a resident of His kingdom.

Among the greatest obstacles in journeying through life is pain. For the Christian, pain, be it physical, psychological or spiritual, is part of that mystery of being united with Jesus crucified, the Redeemer of the world.

The Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, on June 26, 1980, stated, "According to Christian teaching, suffering, especially suffering during the last moments of life, has a special place in God's saving plan; it is in fact a sharing in Christ's passion and a union with the redeeming sacrifice which He offered in obedience to the Father's will. Therefore, one must not be surprised if some Christians prefer to moderate their use of painkillers, in order to accept voluntarily at least a part of their sufferings and thus associate themselves in a conscious way with the sufferings of Christ crucified."

Jesus encountered many persons with varied illnesses throughout His public life. Bartimeus, the man born blind, the ten lepers, the woman with a hemorrhage, Mary Magdalen with her seven demons, are but a few mentioned in the New Testament who had experienced fear,

pain and depression. Those "setbacks" were all part of their successes, as they had put their faith in Christ. With God's blessings, they were uplifted; their handicaps became their victories.

When Dismas, the thief nailed to the cross next to Jesus on the hill of Calvary, was condemned by his community, they saw him as a "loser." In fact, they felt that the best thing that could happen to him was to let him suffer and die. However, in the eyes of Jesus, he was indeed a "winner," so much so, that he is the only person in all of Scripture who was canonized as a saint by Jesus Himself. For our Lord said, "Today, you will be with Me in Paradise." The term "dismal failure" was coined after Dismas — a failure to the world, but a fantastic success in values that are eternal.

Suffering patients need to be given hope, to be told they are loved and that their pain has meaning, that they have been called to a special apostolate which brings them into intimacy with Jesus' passion and cross, then ultimately to His resurrection.

The gospels have many examples of how Christ manifested His love to the "least of the brethren" and these gospels have given them hope and the healing feeling of success. You are another Christ. Like Jesus, look patiently at those whose health has failed, and uplift them to success. Let them know their extraordinary worth. Let them feel very much needed and know that their pain is real prayer. Let them know that their sufferings are not in vain, but that like Dismas, they are on the cross next to Jesus, and in His sight they are winners. They are truly victorious.

— Msgr. Dino J. Lorenzetti
