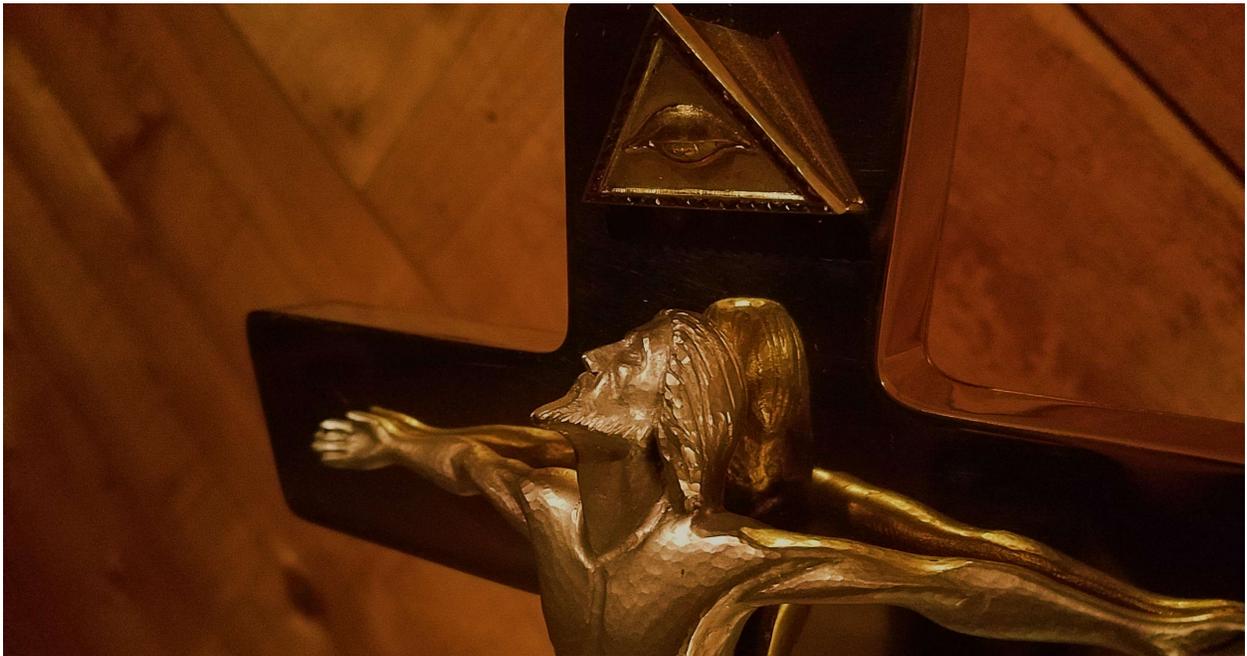


2020 ONLINE HOLY WEEK RETREAT



It goes without saying that St. Paul's reasoning was quite logical. Why did you choose this order? I apply it to myself: Why did you choose this situation in my life when this happened to me?

Hear the beautiful answer which gives us a deep insight into God's great and wondrous world. In order that you may have all the more mercy on me (cf. Rom 11:31-32). Do you understand what this means?

Father J. Kentenich

INTRODUCTION

SUPPLEMENTARY READING

What is the purpose of suffering in our lives? Father J. Kentenich gives us a first answer.

We must become free human beings—that is, free human beings out of love. Paul is a splendid example. You only have to think of this beautiful statement: “For when I am weak, then I am strong” (2 Cor 11:30). Do you understand what this means? When I am weak – then I begin to become strong in God. Weakness – it is a gift for me. Accepting my weakness, having a positive attitude toward my weakness, is a concession to my misery - I am conscious of my contingency. (...)

Or, consider a different, most beautiful statement from the lips of the Apostle Paul. We could or should repeat it time and time again. You can imagine – and we might want to think of Paul as a man who is constantly searching for the ultimate plans of eternal, divine wisdom. Because he was a Jew through and through, the question must have risen in his mind countless times: Lord, God, what are you doing with your Chosen People? You could have chosen a completely different world order. Doubtlessly! As metaphysicians we know that, too. God had the option to choose from among countless world orders. Concretely, why did you choose the order in which Adam and Eve sinned, an order in which my people perpetrated the second fall? Why did you choose this order? You could have chosen a different order; an order in which Adam and Eve would not sin; an order in which my people as the Chosen People would have fulfilled their mission in an extraordinary manner.

He arrived at the simply brilliant, classic answer. We cannot stress it often enough: He chose the sinful state. We will not go into the question of free will. It goes without saying that Paul’s reasoning was quite logical. Why did you choose this order? I apply it to myself: Why did you choose this situation in my life when this happened to me?

Hear the beautiful answer which gives us a deep insight into God’s great and wondrous world. In order that you may have all the more mercy on me (cf. Rom 11:31-32). Do you understand what this means? He chose the condition of our weakness, first as a possibility, then as a reality, that he may have mercy upon us.

You could dwell on this for a long time. If you understand what is meant here, you will even be grateful to relive your past in this light... so that he may lavish all the more mercy and love on me (Father J. Kentenich, November, 1966).

Scriptural Passage (Rom. 11;31-36)

... that he might have mercy upon all. Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How inscrutable are his judgments and how unsearchable his ways! “For who has known the mind of the Lord or who has been his counselor?” “Or who has given him anything that he may be repaid?” For from him and through him and for him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

PURIFICATION

SPIRITUAL READING

- *Scriptural Passage* (Mt.21;12-17)

The Cleansing of the Temple

Jesus entered the temple area and drove out all those engaged in selling and buying there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who were selling doves. And he said to them, "It is written:

'My house shall be a house of prayer,' but you are making it a den of thieves."

The blind and the lame approached him in the temple area, and he cured them. When the chief priests and the scribes saw the wondrous things he was doing, and the children crying out in the temple area, "Hosanna to the Son of David," they were indignant and said to him, "Do you hear what they are saying?" Jesus said to them, "Yes; and have you never read the text, 'Out of the mouths of infants and nurslings you have brought forth praise'?" And leaving them, he went out of the city to Bethany, and there he spent the night.

- *Quote from Pontiff* (RH, #8)

To Bring About A New Creation

John Paul II in his Encyclical *Redemptoris Hominis* makes us aware of the fact that the Apostle Paul, too, looked into the condition of the human person in his time and age and saw how it needed redemption, purification. Today, he says, are we

not convinced of the over poweringly eloquent words of the Apostle of the Gentiles concerning the "creation (that) has been groaning in travail together until now" and "waits with eager longing for the revelation of the sons of God", the creation that "was subjected to futility"? Does not the previously unknown immense progress-which has taken place especially in the course of this century-in the field of man's dominion over the world itself reveal to a previously unknown degree-that manifold subjection "to futility"? It is enough to recall certain phenomena, such as the threat of pollution of the natural environment in areas of rapid industrialization, or the armed conflicts continually breaking out over and over again, or the prospectives of self-destruction through the use of atomic, hydrogen, neutron and similar weapons, or the lack of respect for the life of the unborn. The world of the new age, the world of space flights, the world of the previously unattained conquests of science and technology-is it not also the world "groaning in travail" that "waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God"?

- *Words from Father J. Kentenich* (November, 1966)

Gain Insight Into God's World

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You could dwell on this for a long time. If you understand what is meant here, you will even be grateful to relive your past in this light... so that he may lavish all the more mercy and love on me.

That is why he allowed this and that to happen. Then we will understand the words from the Old Testament so much better: *"Super omnia opera eius misericordia eius"* (The Lord is good to all, and his compassion is over all that he has made. (Ps 145:9). It even seems to me that in this type of relationship with God; that is, in the manner in which I lay bare my soul before God, I acknowledge that I do not deserve his just love. It is a strange thing with us human beings; it is difficult for us to accept God's merciful love. We would much rather accept love that we have merited - merited how? By being noble and good. If we have not been noble and good, if we have to rely on our weakness as the great title to God's benevolence to us, then he can prove that he loves us because he is a father, not because we deserve to be held and embraced by him.

- *Questions for Reflection*

- How can we strengthen the spirit of prayer and of sacrifice during these days?
- What does it mean for us to be more open to the Holy Spirit in our hearts?
- Identify one sin you need to seriously fight against. In all honesty, evaluate your struggle with that sin each evening until the renewal of the Baptismal promises at Easter.
- Formulate one practice that will help you preserve your childlike attitude before God!