

The Witness

Mount Saint Francis Cursillo Center
Mount Saint Francis, Indiana 47146



You are my witnesses, says the Lord, my servants whom I have chosen [Isaiah 43:10]

The Sorrowful Mysteries

By: Greg D. Hamilton

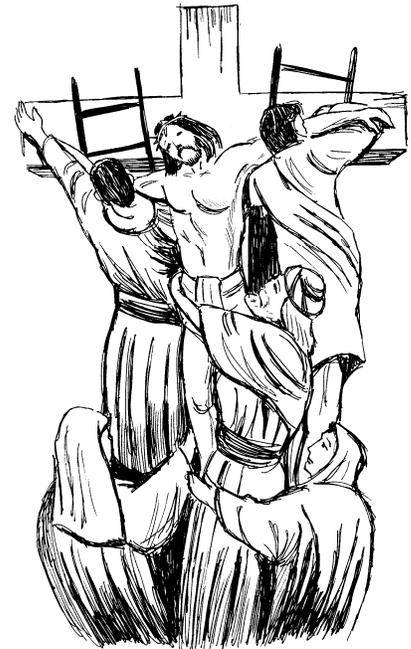
Recently I was praying the Holy Rosary and meditating on its Sorrowful Mysteries when my mind made an association between these sufferings of Christ and the sufferings of those with serious illnesses like cancer. My father, like too many, died of this disease.

Today more and more people are surviving devastating diseases, but there is still much suffering from both the original illness and in some cases the treatment that has extended their lives. I pray for them, and try to make sense of what purpose their suffering serves. Though I had heard of joining ones suffering with that of Jesus, my mind couldn't make this leap until now. I have never had a serious illness myself but my proximity to those who do suffer, allows me to empathize with the experience's I place myself into the five Sorrowful Mysteries.

Agony in the Garden. The Bible does not explain the full extent of anxiety Jesus was dealing with as he spoke to God about his impending execution, but the Gospel of Luke says that he sweat blood as he asked *that the cup might pass him by*. How many of us have prayed the same prayer? Something is unusual during a check-up, or we have a mole biopsied, or there's a shadow on an X-ray, and we brace ourselves for what it might mean. The doctor runs more tests and now we wait for the results. We worry and pray that we won't have to undergo the trial, but know we have no other power to avoid it. Jesus told us not to worry, but how can we not? We have so many plans. We want to live a long life here on earth.

We are concerned for our family. We lose sleep, we worry, and we pray. Jesus gave us the example of "Thy will be done," but we wonder if we can truly accept that lesson for ourselves. We don't know what tomorrow will hold, but we trust that no matter how bad the news may be God can make something good come from any situation.

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The Witness Online

For pictures, archived articles, and the latest Cursillo news, check out what Steve Volpert has done for us over the years with our website—www.cursillo.org/mtstfrancis. Steve has gracefully accepted to continue his hard work with our webpage. Bob Eberle will be doing the Palanca and Communications via Cursillomsf@gmail.com.

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Scourging at the Pillar. During this second mystery, Jesus is punished by Pontius Pilate who was a Roman Governor and part of the invading force occupying the lands of Israel. Those suffering cancer can easily relate to the feeling of an invading force, but in their case it's one occupying their very bodies. While Jesus endured the savage whipping, we endure pain from multiple affronts to our bodily functions. These attacks may be visible or they may be only known to us. Doctors may even give us poisons to attack the occupier, but it's a scorched earth tactic which leaves us decimated even if the cancer cells are killed. We suffer pain, we are weakened, and we are scarred. We pray for healing and a chance to rest and recover. We argue our case. We remind God that we are a good person, a faithful person, and his own creation. We do not deserve pain and death. Yet just as Pilate sent Jesus to the cross, a sentence of condemnation is passed on us. We know that God has the power to heal us just as Christ had the ability to call down angels to protect him from the lash. What we don't know is God's plan for us and purpose for this experience. So, as we pray to our father to overturn the verdict, we endure our pain.

Crowning with Thorns. After being ravaged, Jesus is given purple garments, a reed as a scepter, and a crown made of thorns as the Roman soldiers mocked his kingship. They spat on him, beat him, and humiliated him. Our humiliation may come in the form of nausea, surgeries, loss of various bodily functions, but mostly the inability to enjoy a normal life like those around us. We might rise up to deal with one challenge to our dignity, only to be given even greater limitations and humiliations. How can we stay positive against such overwhelming odds? We work to keep our heads up despite the pain, the amputations, and our weakened state, but we still hear the occupier laughing, sneering, and disparaging us. We turn once again to our Creator for reassurance that we are not defined by our disease. We trust that despite what we may see and feel, He loves us, He will raise us up, and He will make us whole again.

Carrying of the Cross. The cross that Jesus carried was wooden and heavy. Maybe if he had been healthy, he could have labored without difficulty to carry it, but he was weakened by the whipping, the loss of blood, and the lack of food. He struggled, would fall, and then would rise again. What does our cross look like? Perhaps we carry visible scars and endure the stares from strangers. Maybe we are trying to get by with a prosthetic which helps but is never as good as what was taken from us. Or it might just be lifting the weight of our body when catching our breath is a struggle. We may be burdened with worry for those who care for us and the effect our disease has on their lives. In any case, we feel the heaviness of fatigue and weakness. This is not a destiny predetermined by God, but for his own reasons, he is allowing it to continue. The walk is lonely even with others around us. We long to feel the presence of Jesus walking it with us, but sometimes it's just so hard. We know we are surrounded by friends and family caring for us and praying for us. We want this journey to end in whatever way God sees fit. We pray and keep climbing that hill to Golgotha.

Crucifixion. This mystery represents the last stage of Christ's life on earth as well as our own. From the time of our birth, we were destined to die. We just didn't think our death would come so soon. Just as Jesus suffered on the cross, our final hours often come with discomfort and helplessness. We not only feel the pain, we can see the pain on the faces of our loved ones. At this point we can do nothing more except possibly pass on words of love and reconciliation. We know there is something better waiting for us, but the transition is still exacting a high price. We are waiting and we are suffering and there is not much that anyone else can do for us at this time. We pray for our family and for our soul and we wonder if there is a point to this suffering.

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**The Following
Cursillistas Need Your
Prayers**

The lost I will seek out,
the strayed I will bring
back, the injured I will
bind up, the sick I will
heal
Ezekiel 34:16

The Franciscan Friars
Brother Ambrose
Alan & Sharron Barker
Will & Rosie Block
Ron Byerley
Joe Camarata
Theresa Simmons
Carol Flum
Ron Campbell
Kevin Hutt Family
Don & Sue Kochert
Kaye Hobbs
Ruth Houghton
Carol Lenfert & Family
Alice Volpert
Connie McKinley's
Family
Fr. Mike Hilderbrand
Stan Robison
Phyllis Schickel
Eric Hobaugh
The Mount Saint Francis
Cursillo Community
World Peace
Candidates for the up
coming Cursillo
weekends

*Please help keep our
prayer list updated.
Contact Sr. Karen at
812-949-3189 or send
an email to:
karen102850@att.net*

If we can believe that the suffering of Jesus was payment for our sins, then we know that suffering has a value. Just as a child in pain runs to his parents, we find ourselves growing closer to God our Father in our suffering. We sought and received comfort from Him throughout the other stages so we return to God again. While being unable to pursue our normal activities, we've had time to contemplate the truly important things in life that seem to be invisible to so many others. Though we may appear small and weak, we have grown from this experience. Our willingness to rise time and again in the face of a terrifying adversary has been an inspiration to those around us. Others have witnessed the quiet dignity we displayed during undignified situations. Finally, in offering our suffering up to Jesus, it can be joined with His own suffering for the expiation of the sins of the whole world. We can actually join in the redemption of all people.

There is no doubt that these are sorrowful mysteries and there will be many tears. But along with this sorrow, there is always hope. We know we are more than a disease, more than a body, and more than suffering. We know our Lord loves us and that His love will carry us beyond this world. Yet even while we are still here, our suffering can have meaning. We are not being punished. We are not being unjustly attacked. We are living a life that exemplifies a desire to live. These are mysteries and they deserve our meditation. We may never completely understand them in this life, but the answers will come in the next and that is something to look forward to.

Learning to Fly

By: Joe Proctor

Last spring I was enjoying a warm day on the porch when I noticed two adult Cardinals teaching their tiny chicks how to fly. The little ones would jump into the air and flutter their tiny wings only to fall back to the ground. The parents were never more than inches away encouraging and protecting.

Watching this scene, I was reminded how my walk with the Lord is much the same. I jump into the air with good intentions only to fall back to earth because of my shortcomings and failures. But how blessed I am! My friendship group is there to assist and support my efforts. As we pray and share our "walks" with each other, my faith is strengthened and I am ready to begin anew. My group prepares me for new flights; they are Jesus people to me.

I am still learning to fly and there are times when I can "soar like an eagle." But it is my group who loves me that is actually "the wind beneath my wings."

Make a friend, Be a friend, Bring a friend to Christ!



Mark your Calendars

Secretariat meets on 2nd Monday of each month 7:00PM. @ St. John Paul II - St. Joe Chapel - Old School Room.

Pilgrims Way meets on 3rd Monday of each month 7:00PM. @ St. John Paul II - St. Joe Chapel - Room next to gym.

Ultreya meets on 4th Monday of each month 7:00PM. @ St. John Paul II - St. Joe Chapel - Room next to the gym.

April 28—May 1, 2016 Women’s Cursillo Weekend @ Flaget Center, Louisville Kentucky.

May 1, 2016 5:00 PM Cursillo Women’s Closing @ Flaget Center, Louisville Kentucky.

August 13, 2016 MSF Cursillo Fiesta @ MSF Lake—Activities start at 2:00 PM Meal at 4:00 PM

August 25—28, 2016 Men’s Cursillo @ Mount Saint Francis, Indiana

September 14th 9:00 AM - 4th Day @ MSF Lower Chapel—Registration 8:30 AM to 9:00 AM

Mount Saint Francis will be celebrating 40 years of retreats. It will be a year long celebration. The events planned so far include,

April 3 is called "Heart to Heart", talking with a friar.

June 4 is MountFest (taking the place of the picnic),

July 9 is called "Live the Fourth"

Oct. 1 is Homecoming at the Mount.

Bro. Bob Baxter would like to invite all of the Cursillo members to these various events.

Secretariat

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Wanted: Your witness articles

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