

HAVE FAITH IN GOD'S LOVE WHEN SUFFERING AFFLICTIONS

Jesus tells us in today's gospel that whenever we exercise our faith and firmly believe in some good, it will be done for us. This is especially true when our hearts are immersed in trials and sorrows. Very often our difficulties, failures, and disappointments, which so distress us in their present moment, do ultimately have some definite and lasting meaning for some greater good, some higher purpose, especially when our trials condition us to exercise our faith and trust in God's loving providence.

When you are discouraged in your weakness, may God give you the grace to acquire confidence in His love! So often we feel the great weight of our sorrows and difficulties, and are tempted to give in. There are other times when we try to solve our problems by ourselves, by manipulating people or events; to go it alone, to pull the strings ourselves to get out from under that which is plaguing us. But the most successful route is to place them in God's hands, in the spirit of self-abandonment! In effect, to let go and let God!

When you are discouraged in your weaknesses, may God give you the grace to acquire confidence in his love! So often in our journey through life, we unknowingly take the direction which God has willed for us by virtue of our mistakes, our trials, and afflictions. St. Peter in his first letter cautions us, "You may for a time have to suffer the distress of many trials, but this is so that your faith, which is more precious than the passing splendor of fire-tried gold, may by its genuineness lead to praise, glory, and honor when Jesus Christ appears...Although you have never seen him, you love him and you now believe in him. Rejoice with inexpressible joy touched with glory because you are achieving faith's goal, your salvation." Therefore, your glory often rests, not in your earthly achievements, but in the afflictions you are called to suffer in union with Christ's own afflictions. St. Paul once said, "Those who share in Christ's

struggles on earth will surely merit a share in his victory"

When you are discouraged in your weaknesses, may God give you the grace to acquire confidence in his love! And if we have confidence in God's love for us, especially when immersed in adversity, then of necessity, we are better equipped to exercise our faith and trust in God's deliverance and to persevere and endure our trials more patiently. What meaning lies behind our trials and misfortunes, but the opportunity God gives us to exercise our faith and trust in His love! Never forget, our loving Father will always act in our best interests and for our greater good. Can we honestly say the same for ourselves?

When you are discouraged in your weaknesses, may God give you the grace to acquire confidence in his love! Trials may also come our way as agents for our purification or may act as proving grounds to strengthen or reinvigorate our sagging spirit. Who among you has not had a series of strange coincidences during your lives, which brought you, in an overpowering way, to the hand of God? Or have had thoughts, which came upon you with a sort of mysterious force? God may be teaching us knowledge of His ways, if we but only open our eyes in faith to all the ordinary matters of the day! Didn't St. Paul declare, "God's grace is enough for you, for in your weakness, your power reaches perfection. And so I willingly boast of my weaknesses instead, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore, I am content with my weaknesses, with mistreatment, with distress, with persecutions, and difficulties for the sake of Christ. For when I am powerless, it is then that I am strong."

Finally, Bl. Cardinal Newman once counseled, "never disdain the discipline of the Lord, or loose heart when He reproves you. For God only permits what is for your profit!" Indeed, He chastises those whom He loves - for their sake. So when you are discouraged in your weakness, may God give you confidence in His love so that you may persevere patiently in the manner of Christ Himself!