

**Role of Suffering**      Second Week in Ordinary Time      Monday, January 16, 2017  
8:15 AM    **Heb 5:1-10;**    **Mk 2:18-22**    (We can grow through suffering if we take the right attitude and response.)

**“In the days when he was in the Flesh, he offered prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence.”**

And yet he was not saved from death. So the author here is talking about the mystery of God living among us in Christ. And **the mystery of God living among us in Christ involves this role of suffering.** It is part of life. Jesus in his humanity naturally desired to let the cup pass from him and prayed, as it says here “with loud cries and tears.” **But the whole reason why the Word of God became flesh was to, first of all, reveal the true nature of God, which is the God of love and self-giving; but secondly, to incorporate all of us into God.** And because, as the author already pointed out, **the human race was in bondage** because of, or due to, or **by the fear of death, it was not able to accept the gift of love and being incorporated into the self-giving and receiving of God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.** Thus the Word of God becoming human had to share totally in what human life is and has become, not necessarily by design of God, but by the way human beings have lived out their lives and exercised the freedom that God intended them to have.

Now of course God being God, must have foreseen what would happen to freedom, but this did not stop him, because God himself has hope. St. Thomas talks about faith, hope, and love as actually divine virtues. God is the one with the hope. **God created a world with freedom because God has enough hope to realize that it can work out.** Someone will at some point accept the gift, and that someone at some point was of course Christ, although actually Christ himself was already anticipated in various ways by various people. Melchizedek is mentioned,

Abraham, Moses, the prophets in their own ways; and maybe others in other cultures and times anticipated this reception of it. **Jesus really totally received in his humanity the gift**, the gift of God. And in his humanity actually grew to what here is called perfection, whatever that means, a kind of fulfillment. **Jesus in his humanity grew through suffering.** That's the point of this letter.

We all grow through suffering, or at least **we can grow through suffering if we take the right attitude and response**, if we recognize the great potential in our suffering. For what? **For access to divine love.** If we become bitter, if we become resentful, if we become jaded, if we become indifferent, if we become cynical, then we obstruct the very possible benefits that God wants to give us through our suffering. And the saddest thing of all, we make our own suffering useless; **we are the ones who make it useless by our bitterness**, resentment, jadedness, and so on. So it is a choice. How do we live? **How do we take our daily burdens?** How do we deal with the tragedies that come, the disappointments, the great plans that are dashed? What do we do with all that? We can, like Jesus, learn obedience through suffering, and then he becomes the source of eternal salvation for us who obey him.