

Pope St. John Paul II
Salvifici Doloris
On the Meaning of Human Suffering



“Suffering is present in the world in order to release love.”

The Redeemer suffered in place of man and for man. Every man has *his own share in the Redemption*. Each one is also *called to share in that suffering* through which the Redemption was accomplished. He is called to share in that suffering through which all human suffering has also been redeemed. In bringing about the Redemption through suffering, Christ *has also raised human suffering to the level of the Redemption*. Thus each man, in his suffering, can also become a sharer in the redemptive suffering of Christ.”
(Salvifici Doloris, 19)

“It is suffering, more than anything else, which clears the way for the grace which transforms human souls.” Suffering, more than anything else, makes present in the history of humanity the powers of the Redemption. In that "cosmic" struggle between the spiritual powers of good and evil, spoken of in the Letter to the Ephesians, human sufferings, united to the redemptive suffering of Christ, *constitute a special support for the powers of good*, and open the way to the victory of these salvific powers. (27)

Suffering, which is present under so many different forms in our human world, is also present in order *to unleash love in the human person*, that unselfish gift of one's "I" on behalf of other people, especially those who suffer. The world of human suffering unceasingly calls for, so to speak, another world: the world of human love; and in a certain sense man owes to suffering that unselfish love which stirs in his heart and actions. (29)