

Give Thanks in Sufferings

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-An excerpt from His Holiness' book The Life of Thanksgiving.

And, we do not give thanks- especially in sufferings because we did not yet realize the blessing of suffering and its glory.

Suffering is a gift that deserves thanksgiving and as the Apostle said "For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake." (Phil 1: 29). Then, it is a gift with glory too, and it is said, "... if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together." (Rom 8:17). As long as suffering is a way to glory, it deserves thanksgiving.

Therefore, God did not stop suffering from his friends:

St. Paul the Apostle labored more abundantly than all the others in preaching and teaching (1 Cor 15:10), nevertheless, he received persecutions and sufferings more than they all as he explained in (2 Cor 11:23) "I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often"; and God did not keep away all these sufferings from him. But said, when he was chosen to the ministry and apostleship, "For I will show him how many things he must suffer for my name's sake." (Acts 9:16).

What we say about St. Paul the Apostle, also applies to St. Athanasius, pillar of faith, who was exiled four times and many accusations and conspiracies were plotted against him. He was told, "The whole world is against you", but God allowed all this to happen, because in suffering there is glory and it has crowns, also it is an expression of love.

The virgin St. Mary herself endured many sufferings, and she is the holiest person on earth.

If you endure afflictions for God's sake, thank Him from your depth, because you were counted worthy to suffer shame for His Name (Acts 5:41). Thank Him because he directed you to the narrow gate, which leads to the Kingdom and life (Matt 7:14).

Finally, I say that we sometimes do not give thanks because we consider the good we are in, is something normal, which does not need thanksgiving!

You have many good things for which you do not give thanks, like health and shelter, as you count them normal, but those who are deprived of them, know its value, and if they receive them, surely they will thank God for them. Let me give you an example: Perhaps you do not give thanks now for the lights we have during our lecture, but if, for any reason the current is cut off, then you realize the grace you were in.

There are many normal matters in our life, which need thanksgiving!