# WHY GOD SENDS US CROSSES

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Beloved in Christ the Lord, on this Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost we behold today, with the eyes of the soul, a moving scene, when at the gates of the little town of Naim the Giver of life meets death. And it is hard even to imagine what that poor widow felt, who took part in the funeral of her beloved son. When the Saviour turned to her and said, "Do not weep," she probably did not take these words of the Lord Jesus seriously. Why should she not weep, not grieve, when she had lost her only child? Why should she not weep and not grieve, when her whole world had in a single moment collapsed in ruins? For the one being carried to the grave is not an old man, experienced and conquered by age, but a young man. A young man who certainly dreamed of a long life, full of success and joy. And yet, so unexpectedly, the cold and unfeeling scythe of death cut down the ear of his existence. It brought to nothing all his plans, dreams and hopes.

Dear faithful, every day hundreds, and perhaps thousands, of widows lose their sons. Every day hundreds of thousands of people fall ill with grave diseases, and surely more than one of them will die today. What significance, then, does it have for us that the Lord Jesus took pity on the widow of Naim, that He raised her son, when He does not hear our prayers, when He does not give us what we ask for? Why does He not carry out our plans and dreams? Why must we, every day of our lives, be convinced of how true the words of Job are: "Man born of woman lives a short and painful life. He springs up and withers like a flower. He passes like a fleeting shadow"?

Dear faithful, in order to find answers to all these questions that trouble us, we should turn to the book of Isaiah, through which the Lord God instructs us with the following words: "My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways." Our Creator, Almighty God, knows perfectly all our needs and cares. And even if at a given moment of our life we are unable to grasp these plans of God, even if we rebel, oppose them, reject them, the Catholic faith nevertheless confirms us in the conviction that God always gives us what is best for our soul, what will best serve our salvation. It is not always what we would like, what we desire, that is good for our soul.

For what does it profit a man to have earthly riches, if they were to draw his attention away from heavenly treasures and bring him onto the road that leads to damnation? What does it profit a man to have health and strength, if he were to spend them on evil deeds, lose sanctifying grace, and die in mortal sin? What does it profit a man to have a long life, if it were to be dissolute and lead him to eternal death, which is, after all, infinitely more terrible and more dreadful than the death of the body?

## THE CROSS AND SANCTIFICATION

My dear ones, we are perfectly aware of this. The longer we live, the better we understand it, the better we see that our temporal life is full of difficulties, hardships, toils, disappointments. But as Catholics we must constantly remind ourselves of what is today forgotten, what is today passed over in silence, what you will not hear from post-conciliar clergy: here on earth the Lord God sends us every day lesser and greater crosses for a very specific purpose. Not in order to crush us, but so that, accepting them in submission to the will of God, we may gain merits and save our souls.

The crosses which the Lord God gives us here on earth. Each one has a different cross. It may be sickness, it may be the death of someone close, it may be old age, loneliness, rejection, lack of understanding from other people. These crosses which the Lord God gives us can become an instrument of our sanctification, of our purification.

And now it depends on the person how he will treat that cross. Will he join his suffering, his toil, his tears to the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ? Will he give it all, through the hands of the Most Holy Mother, to our Saviour? And in this way make of that suffering an instrument of purification and sanctification? Or will he keep these toils and sufferings for himself, not bring them to the Saviour, not offer them through the hands of the Most Holy Mother to our Lord Je-

sus Christ? In that case this suffering, this toil will remain without meaning. It will bear no fruit. It will be without meaning.

And it depends on us, my dear ones, what choice we make. Either we will join our toils and sufferings to the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ and offer them to the Saviour, or, my dear ones, we will waste this cross, this opportunity which the Lord God gives us here on earth so that we might purify our soul, sanctify it, prepare it for eternity with Him. And with horror one must note how many souls today waste this opportunity, this great opportunity for purification and sanctification.

## A SUFFERING PARISHIONER

At the beginning of August I had the occasion to bury one of the faithful, a woman in her eighties, who for the last two years of her life suffered terribly. We can only imagine it, on account of bone cancer. Myeloma, which had eaten away the vertebrae of her spine. For two years she was a prisoner in her own apartment. For two years she was visited by family and acquaintances, who surely looked with horror at her suffering, and who somewhere deep in their hearts said to themselves: "How good that I am healthy, God forbid that I should fall ill." And one after another they tried in some way to comfort her, and each time she would say: "Listen, that is not how the Lord Jesus suffered."

This suffering of hers she offered for the conversion of sinners, for the conversion of her loved ones, and she gave that suffering meaning. She gave that suffering, that sickness, a supernatural dimension. She made it so that this toil, this sickness could bear fruit.

And let this be a lesson for us, my dear ones. The lesson that we should learn constantly to offer up all our toils, sufferings, sicknesses and old age through the hands of Our Lady of Sorrows at the foot of the Cross. And in this way, let us make of all that frightens us here on earth, all that is a burden to us, an instrument of our purification, an instrument of our sanctification. And then, my dear ones, we will carry that cross with peace of heart, with a smile on our face, knowing that this suffering has meaning, knowing that this suffering leads us to God, to heaven, to salvation.

And let us remember, my dear ones, that no one ever promised us a life strewn with roses. On the contrary, in the book of Job we find the following words: *Militia est vita hominis super terram.* The life of man on earth is a warfare. A struggle between good and evil, light and darkness, God and Satan. Therefore Holy Church rightly prays in today's Postcommunion: "We beseech Thee, O Lord, may the working of this heavenly gift take possession of our soul and body, that grace, and not our own opinions, may always have precedence in us."

Amen. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Praised be Jesus Christ.