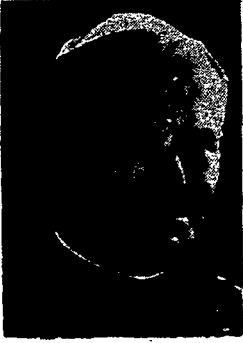


Suffering Is a Grace for Church

The following is excerpted from a recent address by Pope John Paul II.

During the last few months God has allowed me to experience suffering, and to experience the danger of losing my life. At the same time he has allowed me to understand clearly and completely that this is a special grace of his for me, myself, as a man, and at the same time — considering the service I am carrying out as Bishop of Rome and Successor of St. Peter — a grace for the Church.



And so, dear brothers and sisters, I know that I have experienced a great grace. And recalling with you all that happened on May 13 and in the whole following period, I cannot but speak about this above all. Christ, who is the Light of the world, the Shepherd of his fold, and above all the Prince of pastors, has granted me the grace to be able, through suffering and at the risk of life and health, to bear witness to his Truth and to his Love. It is precisely this that I consider to be a particular grace bestowed on me — and for this reason I express my gratitude especially to the Holy Spirit, whom the Apostles and their successors received on the day of Pentecost as the fruit of the Cross and Resurrection of their Master and Redeemer.

It is for this reason that, this year, the feast of the descent of the Holy Spirit took on particular significance for me, when, together with the whole Church, and especially in union with the Ecumenical Patriarchate, we gave thanks for the gift of the First Council of Constantinople celebrated 1,600 years ago — together with the commemoration, here in Rome, 1,550 years afterwards, of the Council of Ephesus. From the time of the First Council of Constantinople the whole Church has professed: "I believe in the Holy Spirit who is the Lord and giver of life."

It was precisely to this Holy Spirit "who gives life" that Christ referred when he said to the Apostles before his ascension to the Father: "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth." It was the Holy Spirit who, from the day of Pentecost, helped the Apostles to bear witness first in Jerusalem and then in various countries of the world of that time. It was he who gave them the strength to bear witness to Christ before the whole people, and, when they were going to

face torture for this, he allowed them to rejoice "that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name (of Jesus)."

It was the Holy Spirit who led Paul of Tarsus through the streets of the world of that time. It was the Holy Spirit who sustained Peter in bearing witness to Christ, first in Jerusalem, then in Antioch, and finally here in Rome, the capital of the Empire. This witness was confirmed at the end with martyrdom, as was also the witness of Paul of Tarsus, the great Apostle of the Gentiles.

These words which Christ the Lord and Redeemer, Christ the eternal Pastor of souls, addressed to the Apostles before going to the Father, refer to their Successors, and refer also to all Christians. The Apostles, in fact, are the beginning of the new People of God, as the Council teaches. But if all are called to bear witness to the crucified and risen Christ, those after the Apostles who inherited the pastoral and magisterial service with the Christ, especially during the first centuries, mystical Body of Christ increased, the Church emerged, became more deeply rooted in souls and consolidated in that ancient world which — so often — responded to the good news of the Gospel with bloody persecutions.

All those who come to Rome, to the "Apostolic memories," those who return in the footsteps of St. Peter and St. Paul, should keep all this before their eyes. I, too, am a pilgrim here. I am a foreigner, who, by the will of the Church, has had to remain here and assume the succession in the Roman See after so many great Popes, Bishops of Rome. And I, too, feel my human weakness deeply — and therefore I repeat the Apostle's words confidently: *virtus in infirmitate perficitur*, "My power is made perfect in weakness." And therefore, with deep gratitude to the Holy Spirit, I think of that weakness that he permitted me to experience since May 13, believing and humbly trusting that it may have served for the strengthening of the Church and also that of my human person.

This is the dimension of the divine Trial which is not easy to reveal to man. It is not easy to speak of it with human words. Yet it is necessary to speak of it. It is necessary to confess with the deepest humility before God and the Church this great grace, which became my portion at that very period when the whole People of God was preparing for a special celebration of Pentecost, dedicated this year to the memory of the First Council of Constantinople — 1,600 years — and also of the Council of Ephesus — after 1,550 years.

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Assemblywoman Pinny Cooke
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extends Holiday Greetings
and cordially invites her constituents to an Open House at the District Office
2541 Monroe Avenue
December 22nd
4-6 p.m.



BALLET — "The Nutcracker" by the Eglevsky Ballet, 3 and 8 p.m., Sunday, Dec. 20; 8 p.m., Monday and Tuesday, Dec. 21 and 22. Tickets, now on sale at the Rochester Philharmonic Office, Eastman Theatre, are \$13.50, \$11.50, \$8.50, \$7.

CHRISTMAS SONGS — By Mitzi Collins, 7 p.m., Thursday, Dec. 17, Lowden Point Branch Library.

FAMILY STORIES — By Jay Stetzer, 2:30 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 19, Sully Branch Library.

PUPPET SHOW — By the Merry Glen Puppets, 2 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 19, Arnett Branch Library.

FILMS — "Child's Christmas in Wales," 1 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 19, third floor auditorium, Central Library, Rundel Memorial Building; "Seventh Voyage of Sinbad," 2 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 19, Pittsford Community Library. Free.

CHILDREN'S FILMS — "Christmas Cracker," 3 p.m., Thursday, Dec. 17, Rush Public Library; "Pluto's Christmas Tree," 10:30 a.m., Friday, Dec. 18, Janes Library, 200 Fairport Road; "A Christmas Gift," 4 p.m., Friday, Dec. 18,

Monroe Branch Library; "Christmas Lace," 11:30 a.m., Saturday Dec. 19, Riga Free Library; "The Giving Tree," 12:30 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 19, Pittsford Community Library; "Christmas Dream," 1 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 19, Greece Public Library; "On the Run," 1 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 19, Parma Public Library; "Christmas Gift," 2 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 19, Rundel Library; "Noah's Animals," 2:30 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 19, Lowden Point Branch Library; "Christmas Cracker," 3 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 19, South Ave. Branch Library.

CHILDREN'S THEATER — The Tic/Toc Players present "The Further Adventures of Paddington Bear," 7:30 p.m., Friday, Dec. 18; 2 p.m., Dec. 19 through Jan. 3, main auditorium Nazareth College Arts Center. Tickets are \$3 and available by calling box office, 586-2420.

NFP CLASSES — Sponsored by Natural Family Planning Education, 3:30 p.m., Friday, Dec. 18, Kearney Building, St. Mary's Hospital.

SENIOR MATINEE — Christmas party including movie "Hans Christian Anderson" starring Danny Kaye. Doors open at 11:30 a.m., film at 12:30 p.m., party at 2:30 p.m., Thursday, Dec. 17, George Eastman House.

PROMENADE III — Norman Leyden conducting Nazareth College Chorus in music by Bizet, Tchaikovsky, Vaughan Williams, Samuel Adler, 8:30 p.m., Friday and Saturday, Dec. 18-19, Dome Arena. Tickets: \$15, \$11, \$9, \$6, \$5.50, \$4.50.

JOY OF CHRISTMAS — Four centuries of Christmas music by the Packet Boat Crew Ltd., 8:15 p.m., Thursday through Saturday, Dec. 17-19; 3 and 7:30 p.m., Sunday, Dec. 20, at the Shipping Dock Theatre of the Rochester Museum and Science Center's Strasenburgh Planetarium. For reservations call Planetarium box office, 271-4320, ext. 411.

CHILDREN'S THEATRE ON TOUR — "Dreams from the Nutcracker" performed by Pamela Wilkens White, 2 and 4 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 19, RMSC Eisenhart Auditorium. Admission: \$4.50, adults; \$3.50, students through high school; \$1, discount for RMSC members and their children.

SPOTLIGHT TOUR — of the Memorial Art Gallery's Oriental scrolls collection, 2 p.m., Sunday, Dec. 20. Tour is free with a paid gallery admission. The Gallery will be open for its usual hours, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Thursday, Dec. 24; closed on Christmas Day; and will reopen 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 26.

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