

END OF LIFE WORKSHOP – SUFFERING TABLE GROUP DISCUSSIONS

SUFFERING IS:

- Means something new in our lives; it is more space for growth
- Result of previous experience
- Not getting what we want and getting what we don't want
- Exhausting and requires courage and tenderness
- Helplessness; stuck in empathy
- In a place of hopelessness
- Subjective
- Fluid (it ebbs and flows, waxes and wanes), as is resilience
- Denial
- Guilt
- Having no spiritual purpose in life
- Easier to handle if I share some of the details of it with others who I consider special – who, to me, are important
- Not supposed to be there
- Unloved / unwanted
- Wanting to be other than they are
- Made more bearable when voiced, shared, understood and accepted
- A lack of happiness.
- Enduring physical pain and lack of relief for it, or diversion, which would bring about a living hope of wellness.
- Discomfort in our being.
- Torment or anguish that evokes questions like 'why me?' 'What did I do to deserve this?'
- Isolated grief
- Continuing to live with darkness in the light of life's ongoing normality
- Losing connection to others
- Loss of inner peace
- Being alone when all you want or need is to NOT be alone.
- Inner Chaos
- Painful, horrible, overwhelming, unexplainable, individual to us
- Pain in many colors and can become a rainbow
- Unfathomable
- A weariness
- No respect of persons – it comes to everyone!
- Physical / emotional
- The absence of peace in the midst of pain
- Varies in degrees
- Real and inescapable in life

- Part of life/ universal X 2
- Part of life and we need to stop and deal with it
- Part of being human
- Mostly involuntary
- Something that comes without any notice
- Motivate / discourage
- Sometimes avoided to be available to others – to be of service to others. But it becomes a delayed acceptance of suffering.
- Feeling alone on the journey
- Exploration of the unknown – journey to an unknown territory – map unclear
- A journey, not chosen as destination or travelling
- Unbearable in isolation
- Fear of vulnerability
- Call to my life long is a pain
- A window to the promise of greater things to come: hope
- Unavoidable – occasion to invite God's presence – God's suffers with us
- Feeling disconnected with God
- Becoming aware of my limits and asking God to help me live through this
- Birthing into a new life of eternal peace and everlasting joy
- Not the end of joy
- Your perspective
- Opens and relives the fullness of life as sacred
- Sustainable when I have those whom I love with me
- Often deepened by the fear of the unknown, but some relief is often brought about by hope.
- A blessing with unpleasant gift wrapping paper x 10,000
- Can be God's mercy in disguise
- The unwelcomed guest
 - New stories
 - Someone else's experience illuminating your own
 - Rearranging schedules, time lines, plans
 - Causing extra work
 - Straining patience
- Naming / finding the Real, especially what is often not said, accepted or considered correct. Naming what it is.
- What makes suffering be more of a physical pain or of emotional pain. Is one more significant than the other?
- What you have at the moment and being thankful
- A state that varies in magnitude for everyone

SUFFERING MAY BE RELIEVED BY:

- Love – other’s love/care, God’s love
- The presence of one who cares enough to not see the suffering one as a burden or be afraid of being in the presence of suffering
- The loving presence of another human being who cares
- Finding a meaning for it. Meaning is suffering may come from faith in the afterlife.
- Refocusing the
- Why me? Why not me?
- energy, medication, acknowledge
- Mindfulness
- Contemplating we are more alike than different
- Accepting the truth and not clinging to life as permanent
- Letting yourself be in it. Therefore we ‘go there’ and practice (Mindfulness)
- Companionship X 5
- Visits
- Sharing with someone X 5
- Sharing in others suffering, rituals, and reclaiming the power of faith
- Shared with close friends or loving family members
- Sharing it with those who support me through touch, words, music, and empathy
- Sharing, being present, acknowledging time
- Loving, connected presence X 2
- Loving touch – holding, hugging, being with
- Someone else being present
- Empathic support
- Sharing in rituals that have held meaning in the past X 5
- When I do a service at a nursing home for example, and end with everyone saying the Lord’s prayer, even the people who don’t seem to be aware come to live and say the prayer out Loud.
- Use of traditions
- Stories of others who have made the journey,
- Giving oneself permission to express the pain / loss / fear, etc.
- Knowing someone is there to support you
- Knowing that you are not alone
- Making the choice to see the joy that exists beside it
 - Amidst his recollection of his conversation with Eli, he so vividly recalled the sight of the nature around him, the senses of living.
 - Be here now fully.
- Those who join you on the journey
- WE will be okay

- Accepting our own situation in comparison to that of others
- Act on pain to help relieve it so you can go on
- Tasting another's tears. We then come in!
- I unite my suffering to Christ who suffered for me. I offer this suffering for those who are suffering more than I.
- Give it meaning
- Have to act on it
- Allowing the person to talk / share
- Awareness, recognition / meditation
- Helping others and loving others to love and obey
- Something, or maybe nothing at all
- Cure
- Death
- The meaning you attach to it.
- Acceptance and prayers X 2
- The sacrament of the sick
- Medical interventions
- Hope for relief in time
- Support from family, friends, caregivers
- Spiritual guidance from a pastor
- Thankfulness
- Surrendering
- Looking for a little piece of happy joys that you can look forward to
- Taking the holy communion daily and anointing
- Retreating into one's self and into God
 - And that's where Meaning comes from
- Trusting that:
 - God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in times of trouble, even though the earth should give way, and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, there is a river whose streams make glad the city of our God
- Knowing that the deepest reflection and meaning comes in the time of pain and suffering, also accepting that life is a gift
- Getting distracted with a group as listening / viewing a hockey game (example)
- Maintaining day-to-day normalcy. Keep everyday routines such as family meals and personal care and maintenance.

MEANING IN SUFFERING MAY COME FROM:

- Love
- Putting suffering in context
- Perspective
- Unexpected places / people
- Those accompanying you on the journey
- Fellowship and companionship X 2
 - Conversation and reflection
 - Remembering our shared human experience
- Contemplating from why me and asking why not me?
- Wandering of the mind / random thoughts - mindfulness
- The opportunity to experience raw emotion, quality time, and the ability to share profound feelings with those we love and care about
- Something seemingly meaningless – as grape juice and a bun, and the one that suffered in our stead
- Discovering again and again what you already have with different views from a lower position (humble)
- Distracting ourselves / minds with mundane things... ‘I don’t have any raisins’
- Inner wisdom
- Connection and listening by ‘we’ X 3
 - Past life, present life, future life
- Transformation of the soul / growth
- A belief in someone / something / some idea
- People not being afraid
- Loved ones being able to be present and accompany the person on their work
- Spiritual and human love and compassion
- Listening with compassion to others from the heart
- Facing our fears
- Generational healing
- Taking the time to live suffering, and to recognize how suffering has changed me.
- Reminds me of my vulnerability, fragility, I’m not in charge
- Something you once had and now have lost.
- Our belief that the Good Shepherd cares... we’ll be okay
- Suffering and inviting God to enter my pain and journey on a pilgrimage with him.
- The presence of the Lord.
- Christ – walking and journeying with the sufferer
- Uniting in Christ suffering. Offering for a good cause.
- Jesus on the cross
- How one experiences God journeying with us
- Raphael (Num.24)

- Walking into new life of eternal peace and lasting joy
- Observing all experiences as moments in time that are not permanent and will change
- Surprising unanticipated circumstances and or relationships
- Searching along the way for places of rest, hearing the stories of others
- Gratitude
- Solidarity with other sufferers
- Unanticipated insights
- Sharing it, accepting it, resisting it
- Storying it – capturing it in a story
- The sacred and the ordinary – recreation and community
- Humour – not taking myself so seriously
- Joining with the sufferings of the world – common humanity
- Rituals – childhood prayer, music
- Recognizing the deeper meaning and levels of familiar rituals
- When we realize that our suffering is part of a greater story
- Reflecting and being grateful for what you have at the moment in comparison to others

Suffering is a human emotion that all humans will experience; for many it may be present all their lives.

Life is an adventure full of mystery lived in the mystical body of Christ's passion and resurrection

Grace finds beauty in ugly things.

Communion of Saints in the story – real/true meaning when I was at my friend's death sitting at her bedside, suffering with her. I live the 'Communion of Saints'.