

FROM THE BISHOP

Suffering...Rejoice...Hope

Suffering is something each of us faces at some point in our lives. For some, suffering is something they endure throughout their lives. For most of us, though, we experience only moments or periods of suffering—whether of the physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual kind.

We typically respond to suffering with sadness, resignation, determination, disbelief, or even anger. Rarely, however, do we react to suffering by rejoicing. To do so might seem somehow mad or even sadistic.

And yet in the fifth chapter of his letter to the Romans, we hear Saint Paul proclaim that as Christians, “we rejoice in our sufferings.” It’s such a counterintuitive thing to say.

To begin to understand what Paul is suggesting, we must read on: “We rejoice in our sufferings,” he writes, “knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us” (Romans 5:4-5).

Suffering produces endurance. Many of us know the truth of this, in some way, firsthand. The trials of this life often have a way of producing in us endurance, the ability to bear up under the pressures of difficult circumstances, and carry on.

And endurance produces character. Our ability to endure the seemingly unrelenting “changes and chances of life” forms character, the kind of steady and self-possessed disposition that comes as the result of testing.

Saint Paul’s reflections here are interesting because they sidestep the question of causality. He doesn’t ask, “Why do bad things happen to good people?” or question the source of suffering, and then wrestle in vain for a satisfactory answer. Instead he simply accepts that bad things do happen, often resulting in suffering, a reality we know all too well.

He then presents the possibility that our suffering can ultimately be an opportunity to be taken advantage of, that it can be used for a positive purpose. Suffering can be redeemed.

As Christians, we believe that suffering has been redeemed in an ultimate way through Jesus Christ. The cross, the ultimate sign of suffering, leads to the empty tomb, the ultimate sign of healing, redemption, and hope.

Suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope. Having passed through the tests and challenges of this life, we find hope in the knowledge that sometimes we, and always others, have passed this way before—and even our own Lord has passed this way before.

The season of Lent, though which we have just passed, reminds us that there is no suffering that we endure that God in Christ has not also endured: disappointment, derision, mockery, rejection, persecution, betrayal, torture, death. And yet all those sufferings find their redemption—and their purpose—in Jesus Christ’s resurrection.

As we continue in the season of resurrection that is Eastertide, may we find the endurance and character to find purpose in whatever suffering with which we are confronted, and the necessary hope by which to see it redeemed.



Souffrance - allégresse - espoir

Chacun d’entre nous doit faire face à la souffrance à un certain moment de la vie. Certains sont affligés par la souffrance tout au long de leur existence. Pour la plupart d’entre nous toutefois, l’expérience ne perdure que pendant quelques moments ou de courtes périodes— que la souffrance soit de nature physique, mentale, émotionnelle ou spirituelle.

Nos réactions à la souffrance se manifestent typiquement sous forme de tristesse, de résignation, de détermination, d’incrédulité ou même de colère. Rarement toutefois, réagissons-nous avec allégresse. Une telle réaction semble tout à fait irrationnelle ou même perverse.

Malgré cela, Saint Paul proclame, dans le cinquième chapitre de sa Lettre aux Romains, qu’en tant que chrétiens, « nous nous glorifions même des afflictions ». Cela semble tellement illogique comme déclaration ...

Pour comprendre là où Paul veut en venir, nous devons poursuivre la lecture : « nous nous glorifions même des afflictions, » écrit-il, « sachant que l’affliction produit la persévérance, que la persévérance mène à l’expérience, et que l’expérience apporte l’espérance. Or, l’espérance ne déçoit pas, parce que l’amour de Dieu a été répandu dans nos cœurs par le Saint-Esprit qui nous a été donné. » (Romains 5:4-5)

La souffrance, l’affliction mènent à la persévérance. Plusieurs d’entre nous ont appris cette vérité à la dure. Les aléas de la vie ont souvent la conséquence de développer notre persévérance, cette capacité de résister à la pression de circonstances pénibles et d’aller de l’avant quand même.

Et la persévérance développe notre expérience. Notre capacité à faire face à la continue « instabilité de ce monde » forge notre expérience, cette attitude pondérée et cette maîtrise de soi qui se développent avec les épreuves.

Et il est intéressant de noter ici que les réflexions de Saint-Paul éludent complètement la question de causalité. Il ne demande pas « Pourquoi est-ce que des choses pénibles arrivent à de bonnes gens? »; il ne se questionne pas sur la cause de la souffrance pour ensuite se débattre pour trouver une réponse adéquate. Il accepte plutôt que des choses pénibles se produisent et causent de la souffrance, une réalité avec laquelle nous sommes plus que familiers.

Il décrit ensuite la possibilité que notre souffrance soit une opportunité dont nous pouvons tirer profit, qu’elle puisse être utilisée de façon positive. Notre douleur peut être rachetée.

En tant que chrétiens, nous croyons que la souffrance a été rachetée de manière définitive par Jésus-Christ. La croix, ultime symbole de souffrance, mène vers un tombeau vide, ultime symbole de guérison, de rédemption et d’espoir.

L’affliction mène à la persévérance, la persévérance forge l’expérience et l’expérience conduit à l’espoir. À travers les épreuves et les difficultés que nous traversons au cours de notre vie, nous trouvons l’espoir dans la certitude que cela fait partie de la vie, que bien d’autres ont connu l’adversité eux aussi – incluant le Christ notre Sauveur.

La saison du Carême que nous venons de vivre nous rappelle que nous ne faisons face à aucune souffrance que le Christ n’a pas lui-même endurée : déception, dérision, moquerie, rejet, persécution, trahison, torture, mort. Et malgré tout, toutes ces afflictions sont rachetées et justifiées par la résurrection du Christ.

Alors que nous avançons dans la saison de résurrection que constitue ce Temps pascal, puissions-nous trouver la persévérance et l’expérience qui nous permettront de donner un sens à toute souffrance qui nous affligerait, et trouver l’espoir essentiel à sa rédemption.

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By Jeffrey Metcalfe

Checking privilege at the border

As a white, blue-eyed, blonde-haired male who holds a Canadian passport, I can pass through most borders like a warm knife through butter. Not being stopped or scrutinized at borders, I am not often forced to think about them and that is how white privilege works—it gives you the luxury of thoughtlessness.

Flying back from a conference, I stand at the desk of an airport terminal's gate, preparing to board, ticket in hand, passport at the ready. Like the security checkpoint prior to the gate, the boarding agent barely glances at my documentation before scanning my ticket and allowing me to board the flight for home.

I've participated in the rituals of border crossing so many times that they now seem both easy and natural. In truth, they are neither, but the degree to which they seem so says a great deal about my own privilege and the function that borders serve in the life of our nation-states.

The reality is that my experience of borders is not the experience of the majority of the world's population. About a hundred people will perish in the Sonoran desert this year, and hundreds, if not thousands more, will drown this summer in the Aegean Sea in an attempt to cross borders. They make these perilous attempts, for they know that their lack of proper documentation, their country of origin, their race or their religion will make them objects of scrutiny at the border; that rather than welcoming them as refugees, the border will harden into razor wire and walls, prisons yards and camps.

While countries that have signed the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees are required by international law to hear the asylum claim of any foreign national within their borders, this convention does not apply to those who are outside their borders. Respecting the letter of the law, Canada, like most northern nation-states, practices "interdiction," a fancy term that means if a nation-state can stop refugees before they cross the border, they have no obligation to listen to their claims. We are happy to take the 25,000 Syrian refugees we select and deem worthy of crossing our borders, but we attempt to intercept, redirect and stop those who might try to make that crossing on their own.

This is one of the reasons that airlines check your tickets as you board the plane. Governments slap carriers with significant fines for allowing persons on board with faulty documentation. Since corporations are not subject to the Refugee Convention, they can refuse passengers even if they are forced migrants seeking asylum.

Nation-states, thus, use these fines to encourage airlines to stop potential refugee claimants before they arrive.

These kinds of restrictions are why many suffering, forced migrants will make the perilous journey over deserts and seas this summer to find a place where their claims of asylum will not be subject to our border regimes' discrimination. In the words of anthropologist Shahram Khosravi, "Sacrifice is a primary act of worship. Sacrificing border transgressors is part of the worship of the nation-state and acknowledgement of its sovereignty."

Yet, as followers of Jesus, we worship a God who has formed us into a people whose sovereignty is constituted and regulated, not by borders, but through our participation in the story of God reconciling to God's self all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of Christ's cross. (See Col. 1:20). In the light of Jesus' sacrifice, every life sacrificed on the altar of borders to maintain

the sovereignty of the nation-state is an act of idolatry and an abomination to God.

Sponsoring refugees is a critically important part of pushing back against the principalities and powers of our world that deny people a place to call home, but we cannot stop there. As followers of Jesus, we must also begin to ask ourselves how our own borders, political structures and cultures of privilege might also be denying people a place to call home.

As I sit on the plane waiting for takeoff, I randomly opened my passport and began to read it. To my utter amazement, I realize that the name in my passport is misspelled and does not match my tickets—maybe it never has. I've been crossing borders with faulty documentation for years, and nobody noticed. It isn't luck that no one thought to check.

Jeffrey Metcalfe is a priest from our diocese of Quebec, a former editor of this paper and currently on leave as a doctoral student in theological studies at the University of Toronto.



A project to give young sex workers in the diocese of Bujumbura, our former companion diocese, a chance of a new life

Many of you will know Allison Blair a member of the Cathedral who is currently working in Burundi. She has received assistance on projects from the Cathedral and others. She wants to give the diocese as a whole a chance to rejoice and participate in this amazing new project. This project gives sex workers in Bujumbura, some who started in the trade at the age of 8, a chance at a different life, new skills, support, affection and knowledge of the God who loves them. Her letter reads:

Dear friend,

This year has been very special so far. After extensive prayers and interviews BRAVO selected 6 new girls aged between 18-22, to train

in sewing. All are in prostitution, the youngest since she was 8. Each has a tragic history and was forced by circumstances into the trade. All insist they want to change and are very grateful to BRAVO for the chance to learn a trade and be able to earn with dignity. They are with us Monday to Friday from 8:00-1:00.

Since starting with great enthusiasm on 01 February, they have all progressed well and follow closely during morning prayer and Bible teaching. Hope is being born but still fragile. Some are literate, some are not. Two have recently lost babies, so now between them the 6 girls have 4 children to care for. Reasons for leaving home young vary from the classic wicked step-mother to exploitation and abuse by witchdoctor father.

Unskilled, with no family support and needing to pay food, rent and medical bills, it is hard to find employment in the poorest country in the world. BRAVO has been able to negotiate afternoon jobs for the girls: domestic help and at a Street Kids Home run by my church. What we need is support to pay their 'salaries' which will buy them off the streets because with the income they will be able to pay for daily food and monthly rent without selling themselves. They will receive food money daily and rent at the end of each month in exchange for work.

It is difficult to leave prostitution, so I can offer no guarantees that if you graciously rescue a life for 10 months, there will be success



forever. I can invite you to pray whether you give or not. I can say that if I multiply by 10 months the positive changes observed in the girls after one month – you are making an incredible investment. I don't feel free to give too many details here but if anyone feels moved to sponsor a girl for 10 months, I will share more information to help you realise just how desperate these girls are.

Thank you so much for listening,

Much love,
Alli

The overall budget for the 10 months of the program: March – December 2017 is \$9894. The monthly cost to support and train each girl in the program is \$120

You can contribute on line: go to the website <https://www.canadahelps.org/dn/13670> and select "Bravo" in the option "SELECT THE FUND YOUR DONATION WILL SUPPORT", then choose "monthly" if that is your preference.

CanadaHelps will issue you an income tax receipt.

Gleanings

Gleanings is a monthly column by Meb Reisner Wright, the diocesan historian, who delves in to the back issues of the Quebec Diocesan Gazette to present us with interesting nuggets of our past.

Our Diocesan Gazette news from the outlying parishes in the Diocese in 2017, and indeed for the issues of recent memory, are almost invariably centred on either the celebrations surrounding confirmations and episcopal visits, on the installation of incumbents, or their regretted departures—or descriptions of the convivial fund-raising efforts of local branches of the ACW—or a project or initiative of a regional deanery, but never—any more, at least—do we have an article devoted to a local wedding!

This was far from the case one hundred years ago, however, when such an event, especially if it were held in a remote area, and involved unusual circumstances, could receive full and detailed coverage such as the following. An article titled “A Labrador Wedding” was submitted to the Gazette in 1917 and appeared in the July issue. It was written by Revd Hollis H. Corey, who, since 1909 had served at Mutton Bay, both as assistant and priest-in-charge, with a break of five years (1912-1916) when he was transferred to the parish of Kenogami so was familiar with the Coast and the customs of its people.

“A very pretty wedding,” Corey began, “took place on Monday, April 23, in the Church Hall at Tabatiere, on the Labrador Coast, when Miss Florence Laura Robertson, eldest daughter of Mr Henry Robertson of La Tabatiere Seal-Fishing Establishment, was married to Mr John Benjamin Cox, a prosperous young merchant, of Harrington.”

“On this Coast,” he took pains to explain, “travel must all be done by sea—either by boat in the open water, or by dog-team on the sea-ice. It so happened that, just at the time of this wedding (a fortnight after Easter), the sea-ice, though still unbroken, was not reported very sound for travel. The difficulty, however, was obviated with true northland ingenuity; and on the morning of the wedding, some eight or nine large dog-teams, conveying loads of merry-makers representative of all the communities from Harrington to Lac Sale, could be seen wending their way over the precarious ice, towards La Tabatiere.”

“The method of travel was by boats, securely lashed on the flat tops of Komatiks [dog-sleds], which, in their turn, were hauled in the usual way by the dogs. Thus, should the ice give way, the passengers seated in the boats would still be safe. In this way many people, including Mrs Corey and myself, were conveyed that day, in boats propelled by dogs, to the scene of the wedding.”

“It thus happened that some eighty persons, representing a long section of the Labrador Coast, were present at the marriage ceremony and were afterwards guests of the bride’s father, at a very sumptuous dinner. So great were the numbers ... that this feast was scarcely terminated at twilight, at which hour the younger and lighter-hearted guests repaired to the home of the bride’s uncle—Mr Frederick Robertson—where the evening was whiled away with music and dancing. ...”

“There were not only people, but also dogs, to be fed” Corey felt it was necessary to explain, “In the Eastern Townships,” he pointed out, for example, “a bride’s parents at a wedding must arrange not only for the entertainment of their guests, but must also provide for many horses, so, here, provision must be made for many dogs. Forty-nine dogs on this occasion partook of the wedding bounty, in the shape of ... whole seal carcasses ... cut up into small pieces and divided amongst them.”

“Early the following morning, a dory lashed in the manner described to a komatik and drawn by a fine team of eight dogs was provided: and in it the happy couple started on their romantic and somewhat adventurous journey over the none-too solid sea-ice, to their new home in Harrington—thirty-six miles distant.”

It was slow going for the newlyweds as “two days were required for the trip, the intervening night being spent at Whale Head. But,” Corey hastened to reassure the reader, “we hear by wire that they arrived without accident the afternoon of the second day.”

Not content with this elaborate account of the means of travel to and from the celebration of this marriage—although on the marriage ceremony itself (which he probably had performed himself) he had touched not at all—Corey then described the groom’s provision for his bride’s future comfort:

“For the reception of his bride, Mr Cox had built, during the winter months, a very fine new house.” Then as now, virtually all building materials must be brought in from elsewhere to the Coast, but this young man, had gone especially far afield. “All the lumber used for floors, walls, ceiling and the finer wood-work being Douglas fir, [he had] imported from British Columbia.” “In these attractive surroundings,” Corey concluded warmly, “we wish the bride and bridegroom a long and blessed married life.”

It is a matter of some regret, perhaps, that such descriptions, with their testimony to local conviviality—and local ingenuity—are no longer part of what we are likely to find in the pages of our Diocesan newspaper.

Imagine, on the other hand, the potential for social media not yet to be realized in 1917!

Faithful Reflections

By Louisa Blair

Crucify him

It’s Palm Sunday again, when we listen to the reading of the Passion. Every year comes that moment when the congregation has to shout “Crucify him!” three times. I always find that both hard to do, and perversely enjoyable. It’s the one time of the year when we are encouraged to join in with the people who called for the crucifixion of Jesus. Why are we asked to do that?

Perhaps because we tend to think we aren’t part of that crowd any more, that crowd who thirsted for Jesus’ blood, the crowd who cries for the blood of innocent people. Haven’t we evolved past that? When the war in Bosnia was happening, I thought, those savages! Killing their neighbours, just because they’re a different religion! I would never do that. Then there was the genocide in Rwanda: that was Christians killing Christians! Those savages! I would never do that. And then the war in Syria - Muslims killing Muslims! The savages! I would never do that, I thought. Just quietly, of course.



But I could, and perhaps I would. In my private heart don’t I sometimes wish to punish people? And what if I were given widespread social permission, or even incited by people I trusted, to go ahead with that wish? Or if a radio host told me those people were responsible for my troubles, or for the suffering of my family or friends, and that it was about time somebody spoke up openly about it? Just listening to the savage things I say to other drivers in the privacy of my car is a sobering reminder of how little it might take to undermine what I like to think of as my deep respect for my fellow man.

What sort of punishment did Jesus deserve? If anyone deserves punishment, he did. He broke all kinds of laws, and not just my personal good-driving laws. There were laws about not working on the Sabbath - he healed people on the Sabbath. There were social conventions about not associating with tax collectors and prostitutes. Those were exactly the dinner invitations he accepted. Laws and institutions and social conventions are human and perhaps necessary, but eventually, because we are the kind of people we are, we use them to justify acting on our fears, our selfishness, and our violence. Crucifixion was for rebels. Jesus rebelled against the rules and conventions because they had replaced God’s mercy.

But weren’t the crucifiers of Jesus sort of acting on behalf of God? Didn’t God sacrifice Jesus, his son, for our sins? Abraham thought God wanted him to sacrifice his son, too. People did that kind of thing in Abraham’s time. But when Abraham was about to do it, God said wait a bit - that’s not really what I want you to do at all. That’s what you think I want you to do. As Jesus said, quoting Hosea, “I desire mercy, not sacrifice.”

We’re the ones who crucified him, just us, not God. You and me. Innocent people die and the planet is dying because of human choices, human sin. When I shout out “Crucify him!” I remember that I am perfectly capable of crucifying him. But he still loves me and forgives me, even for that. If I trust that love, I can dare to challenge myself and others when we start to use rules and conventions to persecute innocent people. Some people call this political correctness, but I call it trusting God, who asks for mercy, not sacrifice. Because the man we crucified has given us the grace to know that his love is stronger than our murderous desires, stronger than death itself.