

Session 5: Filling Up What Is Lacking

WHAT WE FOUND

- Colossians 1:24 is deliberately scandalous, and inspired: Paul completes what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his Body. It must be exegeted, not explained away.
- What it cannot mean, from Scripture itself: it is finished (John 19:30); one offering has perfected for all time (Heb 10:14). Nothing is lacking in the Cross's redemptive value (CCC 614).
- The distinction that resolves it: redemption accomplished (complete) and applied (working through Christ's Body across time, with our participation willed by Christ himself: with him, share, with him: Rom 8:17; 1 Pet 4:13; 2 Cor 1:5; Phil 3:10).
- Paul begged three times for the thorn's removal and was refused; what came instead was grace sufficient and power made perfect in weakness. Not removal: presence with purpose.
- Offer it up, rehabilitated: an intention and a union, never a silencer. You still take the medicine and call the doctor. You offer your own suffering, and may gently invite a willing person to unite theirs; you never impose it or use it to wave away what someone needs.
- The exchange rate is published: the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory to be revealed (Rom 8:18).

THREE VOICES WORTH KEEPING

St. John Paul II (Salvifici Doloris, in summary): Christ did not abolish or fully explain suffering; he transformed it, so that every sufferer united to him shares in his redemptive suffering and finds in it a vocation.

St. Rose of Lima (preserved by her biographer, quoted in CCC 618): apart from the cross there is no other ladder by which we may get to heaven.

St. Francis of Assisi (the perfect joy account, Franciscan tradition): the gifts of God are not ours to boast in; perfect joy is bearing rejection patiently for love of Christ, glorying only in the Cross.

LIVE IT THIS WEEK

1. Pray a morning offering each day: Lord Jesus, I offer you this day, all I do, all I enjoy, and all I suffer, joined to your Cross, for those you put on my heart.
2. Once this week, in the actual moment of an ache or a fear, offer it by name for a specific person. Then take whatever care is right for you.
3. Read Romans 8:18 each night before sleep, and let it be the last arithmetic of the day.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

"I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us."

Romans 8:18

Before next session: Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

Catechism references for this session: CCC 618, 1505, 1508, 1847