Love is not incompatible with suffering. Because God loves us, he will not rest until he sees us wholly lovable. From that perspective, the suffering of human beings who are in need of alteration, freedom from sin and redemption is in fact a corollary to God's goodness.

How does this assist in understanding pain that happens without any apparent human intervention or cause? Lewis suggests that a key element is that pain shatters the illusion of our self-sufficiency. People have a tendency to forget God when things are going well. They turn to Him more when in distress. Further, God's requirement of the surrender of our human will to His is contrary to our nature. As Jesus says, *"Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction".* However unpalatable we find the experience of suffering, and however much we may properly try to reduce suffering in others and in ourselves, suffering can help us understand our weaknesses and imperfections, to bring us closer to God and surrender to His will, not ours. While directing us to a better understanding of suffering, Lewis did humbly admit: *"You would like to know how I behave when I am experiencing pain, not writing books about it. You need not guess for I will tell you; I am a great coward."* **- Stephen S.**

Fourth Sunday of Lent, Cycle B, 2024 Weekly Reflection): From Suffering to Redemption: (1) Suffering: A central theme of Lent is that through Christ's Passion and Cross we are redeemed and offered salvation. This short series begins today with a brief consideration of the perennial difficulty of why human beings suffer. For my comments on this topic I have tried to synthesise some of the thoughts of C.S. Lewis in his book: "The Problem of Pain". These thoughts do, I believe, offer assistance in understanding the reason for suffering.

In his chapter on Divine Goodness Lewis explains that God, being infinitely wise, His judgment and understanding of goodness must differ from our limited understanding of it, even though our understanding grasps some of its essentials. Lewis illustrates the difficulty in this way: *"The Divine "goodness" differs from ours, but it is not sheerly different: it differs from ours not as white from black but as a perfect circle from a child's first attempt to draw a wheel. But when the child has learned to draw, it will know that the circle it then makes is what it was trying to make from the very beginning.".* Similarly, God's love differs from our concept of love. Critically, God's love is not to be confused with 'kindness'. Kindness is the desire to see others happy. Kindness is generally a good thing, but it has its limitations. It may not care whether the other person does good or bad things, so long as they escape suffering. Misplaced kindness, as opposed to true love, may lead to sinfulness, for example in the guise of assisted suicide. Lewis therefore says that if God is Love, He is by definition something much more than mere kindness: *"When Christianity says that God loves man, it means that God loves man: not that He has some "disinterested".. concern for our welfare, but that, in awful and surprising truth, we are the objects of His love. You asked for a loving God: you have one……..: not a senile benevolence that drowsily wishes you to be happy in your own way…… but the consuming fire Himself, the Love that made the worlds…...."* This leads us to the realisation that, being aware of the distinction between love and kindness and trying to recognise what it means to be the object of God's love, makes it easier to understand why His

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10- March-2024   **Eucharistic Prayer – II or III**

Fourth Sunday of Lent

R.C DIOCESE OF SHREWSBURY REG. CHARITY No.234025

Saturday (Vigil) 6.00pm		Kathleen McSorley
Sunday	**8.30am**	**Parishioners**
	10:00am	Jack & Carmel Byrne
Monday	10.00am	
Tuesday	9.30am	
Wednesday	9.30am	Elizabeth Holmes
Thursday	9.30am	
Friday	9.30am	
Saturday	11.30am	
Saturday (Vigil) 6.00pm		
Sunday	8.30am **Fifth Sunday of Lent**	
	10.00am	**Parishioners**

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Confessions - Every Saturday at 11.00am. Morning Prayers 9.15am -Tuesday to Friday

Bishop Mark's Visitation to the Parish. This weekend we welcome Bishop Mark to our parish.   It will be a great opportunity for all of us to meet the bishop as he is making his pastoral visitation to our parish.   Bishop Mark will be available in the parish hall after the Vigil Mass (Saturday 6.00pm) and 10.00am Mass on Sunday.

Family Fast and Lenten offerings: There is opportunity for generous giving from the fast for which **CAFOD envelopes** are available at the back of church. This can be returned via collection plates or can be send them directly to CAFOD's head office. Donations can be done online at www.cafod.org.uk/lent or by using a CAFOD envelope.

Lenten Alms can be offered in the church wall box marked -**Lenten Alms.**

Lenten reflection on Tuesdays- a prayerful reflection on 'We dare to say', Study on the Our Father- with prayers, readings, and reflections. This will be held at 10.00am just after the Mass. (40mnts)

On Wednesdays - reflections on two stations of Cross during the Mass.

On Saturday 23rd March at 11.00am: Mary's Way of The Cross in the Church.

Irish Coffee morning: We celebrate St Patrick's Day with an Irish Coffee morning on a Sunday in March. Those who can assist Kevin to organise this on Sunday 17th March after the 10.00am Mass please telephone Kevin on 584430

Sacred Paschal Triduum: Holy Thursday 7.00pm (Washing of the feet and the Mass of The Lord's Supper) No morning Mass. **Good Friday: 3.00pm** (The Celebration of The Lord's passion and veneration of the Cross/Congregation will be invited for a genuflection or a deep bow). **Holy Saturday   7.00pm** (Easter Vigil and the First Mass of Easter/ Service will start outside the church with the blessing of new fire) **Easter Sunday Mass at 8.30 am and 10.00am**

The red framed notice in the porch lists the services and readings for Holy Week. Please sign your name if you can volunteer for readings or the washing of feet on Maundy Thursday. **NEW READERS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME**.

Further threat to the unborn of abortion up to birth: In the next couple of weeks an attempt is to be made to widely decriminalise abortion up to the birth. This is a further assault on the sanctity of human life in our society. …Please contact your Member of Parliament to ask that they oppose the decriminalization of abortion up to birth. …The Right to Life website has details under 'Take Action' which enables you to find and contact your MP directly and the website of the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children has helpful information under 'Resources https://righttolife.org.uk/littlefighters .   https://www.spuc.org.uk/

Year of Prayer 2024: The Holy Father has announced that 2025 will be a year of Jubilee - an event that happens every 25 years. The theme of the Jubilee year is **"Pilgrims of Hope".** To help us prepare, the Holy Father has established 2024 as a Year of Prayer dedicated "to rediscovering the great value and absolute need for prayer, prayer in personal life and in the life of the Church". Please visit https://www.dioceseofshrewsbury.org/faith-and-life/year-of-prayer-resources/