

Sorrow, Part 1

May 6, 2018

“And you shall be made sorrowful” John 16:20

We all go through difficult times and face sorrow at one time or another in our life. Our Lord speaks of a “little while” and that our sorrow will be turned into joy. When we are going through a tough period in our life, it can be difficult to remember that, in the end, if we persevere in grace, we will be rewarded with joy, sometimes in this world, but otherwise in the world to come. The “little while” our Lord uses is not defined. Is it a little while in terms of life here below or is it a little while in terms of eternity? If the latter, a 100 years would be a little while.

When sorrow strikes us, we need to deal with it, and so it is good to understand what can help us with this. Sorrow is a passion that falls under the concupiscible appetite and we experience it when an evil is present to us. During His Passion, our Lord was the “Man of Sorrows” because the evil of our sins were placed upon Him and He bore them for us, so we in turn could be freed from sin. If we are to conform ourselves to Him, we know we will be purified by sorrow also.

Sanctity is measured by our conformity to Christ, and so the more we resemble Him, the more we may have to suffer. In our suffering, we may not resemble Him in the outward appearance of wearing a crown of thorns and being scourged and nailed to a cross, but we will have a share in His inward suffering and thus imitate Him in this manner. There is the outward reality of the suffering and then there is the inward reality and our response to it that conforms us to Christ. It is usually best that we do not see the resemblance to Christ since pride can set in and destroy any merit. We are more likely to share in the dereliction of Gethsemane than the outward carrying of a wooden cross. The evil, however, that is present to us must be dealt with properly and our sorrow kept in proper bounds.

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