

## *Sorrow, Part 2*

May 13, 2018

To help us deal with sorrow properly, we need to grow in the virtue of patience. It is a virtue, and therefore an ingrained habit that enables us to do what is good in a consistent and even efficient fashion. Moral virtues make the doing of good not only easy for its possessor, but pleasant as well. Virtuous people like to exercise their virtues. It may take a while to acquire the virtue, but once acquired, the exercise of it comes naturally and without effort. It is important to keep this learning process in mind, particularly in dealing with the virtue of patience. Patience is a virtue that helps us deal with evil in a correct way, but we have to posit the acts of the virtue in the process of acquiring the virtue.

One part of this is “putting up with things”, these things being evils or even perceived evils of one sort or another. Evil is around us and, to our chagrin, it is also within us. Evil, whether within or without, makes us sad. Sadness makes it difficult for us to do our work and, if sadness gets serious enough and becomes clinical depression, then it can cripple us entirely. Sadness impairs clear thinking and inhibits proper action. Patience has the task of keeping the sorrow we experience as a result of our encounter with evil under control so we can continue to act wisely. Patience keeps sorrow from getting the better of us. In talking about evil here, it can be in any form, from violence afflicting us from the outside to emotional restraints from within.

The patient person is not overwhelmed by evil, and therefore, remains in a position where the person can do something about it. The patient person, says St. Thomas, is someone who is “in possession of his soul”. He masters his emotion of sadness. He can calmly face evil because he is immune to the poisonous influence of evil, the paralyzing sorrow. He is not depressed by it. The sorrow is still there, but the person continues to deal with the situation.

*Rev. Charles Van Vliet, FSSP*

*Pastor, Regina Caeli Parish*