



Religious Education Congress 2017
 Fr. Robert Spitzer
 The Redemptive Power of Suffering
 Session 3-23

The Redemptive power of
 Suffering

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Overview

1. The Resurrection Perspective
2. Who God Is – and is Not
3. Prayers During Times of Suffering
4. The Opportunities of Suffering
5. Following the Holy Spirit During Times of Suffering
6. Why Would an All-Loving God Allow Suffering?

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I. The Resurrection Perspective

- The Historicity of Christ's Resurrection
- Near-Death Studies
- The Shroud of Turin

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I. The Resurrection Perspective

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Near death studies

1. Parnia-South Hampton University Study 2014.
2. van Lommel *Lancet* Study 2001.
3. Ring Study of the Blind 1999.
4. Holden Combined Veridical Study 2007.

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Veridical data – NDE's

1. Accurate reporting of verifiable data during clinical death.
2. 80% of blind people see during clinical death.
3. Reports from a domain beyond the physical universe. (e.g. the loving white light and deceased relatives)
4. The absence of death anxiety.

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The Shroud of Turin

- The Problematic 1988 Carbon Dating
- Four New Dating Tests
- Pollen Grains, Roman Coins, and the Facecloth of Jesus
- The Enigmas of Image Formation
- An Impressive Relic of the Resurrection

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II. Who God Is – and Is Not


- Who God is – According to Jesus
- Who God is Not – According to Jesus

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Who God Is --According to Jesus

- The Prodigal Son
- Love as Highest Commandment
- "Abba"



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Who God is NOT - According to Jesus

- The Angry God
- The Payback God
- The Disgusted God
- The Stoic God

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III. Prayers During Times of Suffering

- "Help!"
- "Lord Jesus, I place my trust in You."
- "Heavenly Father, Thy Loving Will be done!"
- "Hail Mary, Full of Grace..."
- "Lord, Optimize the Resurrection in this Cross!"

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Prayers During Times of Suffering (Continued)

- "Lord, I Give Up- You Take Care of it!"
- "Lord, Push Back the Foreboding!"
- "Lord, make good come out of whatever harm I might have caused."
- "Lord, You are the Just Judge- You take care of this person/situation."
- "Lord, Thank You!"

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IV. The Opportunities of Suffering

- Shocks us out of superficial and negative meaning in life.
- St. Paul - suffering counteracts pride
- Suffering deepens our need for God - and therefore, our relationship with Him.
- Suffering provides the occasion to sacrifice ourselves for a noble purpose (courage and contribution)-the highest form of Love.

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Opportunities of Suffering (Continued)

- Suffering provides the occasion to respond to others with compassion.
- Suffering induces us to build interdependent societies for the common good.
- Suffering induces us to build communities of Faith.
- **Suffering can be *offered up* to bring God's Grace to all who are in need.
- *Therefore*, suffering frees us for deeper faith, love, and meaning in life--and helps us toward *salvation*.

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V. Following the holy Spirit when suffering

- When one door slams—the Holy Spirit opens another one, or two...
- When new opportunities arrive, they frequently are accompanied by a sense of desirability, fascination, energy, and even enchantment- inviting us toward them.
- Is this new opportunity consistent with my family and work obligations?
- If so, start acting on the new opportunity
- Test the opportunity through Ignatian Discernment- increase or decrease in trust, hope and love.

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VI. WHY Does God Allow Suffering - Caused by Human Beings

1. If humans cannot choose "unlove" then they can't choose love.
NO FREEDOM - no self-initiated love.
1. God made us in His image - not content to create mere robots.

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**VI. Continued
WHY DID GOD CREATE AN IMPERFECT WORLD?**

1. Imperfect world gives rise to challenge, vulnerability, and opportunity to contribute. If the world were perfect, then there would be no challenge, vulnerability, or opportunity to contribute.
2. If there were no challenge, vulnerability, and opportunity to contribute, there would be no *necessity to choose* courage, compassion, self-sacrifice for the noble, contributive love, and common cause with others for these objectives.

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WHY DID GOD CREATE AN IMPERFECT WORLD? (continued)

3. If perfect world - then we can't leave a legacy in this world or for the Kingdom.
4. St. Paul 2 Corinthians 12 - suffering breaks the spell of superficiality, pride, and ego-centricity.


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New Book by Ignacius
Press:
*The Light shines on in the darkness: Confronting
with suffering through faith*
Expected March 2017



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HAPPINESS**
Satisfying Our Restless Hearts



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EPISODES

WRITTEN BY FR. ROBERT J. SPITZER
PRODUCED BY JIM BREEN



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