

“We know that all things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.” These are the beautiful words from the Second Reading today from St. Paul’s Letter to the Romans, which most Biblical scholars say was written sometime between 52-58 AD. So this is a very ancient letter and it was also generally regarded by the early Church to be St. Paul’s most important letter.

“We know that all things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.” As we hear the Lord speak these comforting words to us today, we may be weighed down and burdened by the darkness and suffering in this world or in our own life. Maybe we’re weighed down by the news and everything happening in our country with the pandemic and the ongoing civil unrest. Maybe we’re exhausted with anger or frustration over something. Maybe we’re consumed by fear, anxiety, and uncertainty regarding the pandemic and how it’s going to affect our lives moving forward into the Fall with school, work, family life, etc. Or maybe right now we’re dealing with family problems or conflicts—maybe we’re struggling with a particular

sin or burdened by a heavy cross or difficult challenge. Maybe we're suffering in silence and nobody knows it.

Brothers and sisters, this is why, as disciple of Christ, we *always* need to be kind and merciful to others, because generally we have no idea what others are secretly dealing with in their lives. We don't always know their burdens, crosses, fears, problems, or struggles—most of the time, *we have no clue* what those around us are going through. Therefore, we must strive to be kind, merciful, and patient with others at all times.

So whatever we're dealing with right now in our life, the Lord compassionately speaks to us in the Liturgy of the Word and comforts us saying, "all things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose." In other words, God provides for those He loves and calls and for those who love Him. What do I mean? It would be wrong to understand this passage in a purely materialistic and vain manner as if God is saying, "well if you love me, then I'll give you lots of money, professional success, worldly fame, worldly comfort, and all these other material possessions." No, that's not what this passage

means and that's not how our faith works. God isn't some ATM machine. Now it *is* important to remember that *all good things*, be they visible or invisible, ultimately come from God as the Creator and Source of all being. But God doesn't always give us what we want, rather He *always* gives us what we need, especially for our holiness, happiness, and salvation.

Through prayer and the sacraments, our Lord *always* gives us the grace that we need to carry our crosses in union with Christ and to persevere through any suffering and darkness in faith, hope, and love. So if you're worried about something right now or you're worried about the future, *don't be!* Rather, remember the reassuring words of our Lord: "My grace is sufficient for you, *for power is made perfect in weakness*" (2 Corinthians 12:9).

So when we consider the victorious power of Christ and His saving grace, then we can understand why the Lord would tell us in the Second Reading today that "all things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose." This doesn't even mean that everything will turn out just the way *we* want it to in our life. God

doesn't operate according to our finite plans and limited expectations, which are borne out of our fallen and creaturely view of reality. Rather, it means that if we truly love God and trust in Him, then everything will ultimately be okay in **His** time, in **His** way, and according to **His** saving will—if not in this temporary, earthly life, then **most certainly** in the Kingdom of Heaven for all eternity. Remember the other words of St. Paul which are also contained in his Letter to the Romans: “I consider that the sufferings of this present time are as **nothing compared with the glory to be revealed for us**” (Romans 8:18). In other words, no darkness, suffering, or trial in this life comes even close to the glory and perfection of Heaven!

So brothers and sisters, wherever you find yourself right now in life, **have faith and hope! Do not be afraid!** Always remember that in His Passion, Death, and Resurrection, our Lord Jesus Christ has already won the war for us over evil and its offspring of sin, suffering, and death. **Christ is our eternal Hope and salvation!** Whatever you're struggling with or afraid of, whatever cross you're carrying or challenge you're facing, **don't give up! Don't quit! Don't give in to despair! Ask**

the Lord for the grace of perseverance and He will lovingly give it you!

Always remember that *discouragement never comes from God!* Our patron saint, St. Ignatius of Loyola, was emphatic on this truth! The Holy Spirit *never* seeks to *beat us up*, but He always *seeks to lift us up* and give us the grace to move forward and persevere in faith, hope, and love!

So as we prepare to worship, thank, and praise our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in the Most Holy Eucharist, let's lift up all of our burdens, fears, doubts, worries, and anxiety to Him knowing that His grace is sufficient for us and may we always remember His words in St. Paul's Letter to the Romans: "We know that all things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose."