

Encouragement Encouragement

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Victim Souls..... Inspirational Youth

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Reading the title, you may think that the two aspects do not go together. Just the word 'victim' may bring many thoughts to mind. It can be used to represent almost opposing usership. Seeing oneself as a victim is often seen as a way of always accepting a mentality of 'no change' and perpetuating suffering as an inescapable fact of that person's life. The word also is used to speak of people suffering needlessly as a result of some tragedy, accident or of war. There is also a usage of the word 'Victim Souls' which is applied to those who agree or offer themselves to God for the good of others in sufferings of various types.

These victim souls or those who chose to suffer, or make use of their suffering vicariously, count among many famous Saints and Blesseds, holy men and women who through their acceptance achieved much for the benefit of others both spiritually and temporally. There are many such, names such as St. Padre Pio, St. Sr. Faustyna Kowalska, Blessed Marthe Robin, founder of the Foyers of Charité, Blessed Alexandrina da Costa and Servant of God, Marcel (Nguyen Tan) Van, St Gemma Galgani and many others all in the twentieth century. Many of these died very young but paradoxically some lived a long time. Little Jacinta and Francisco Marto both beatified died very young indeed. And who can fail to be inspired by these two visionaries of Fatima, their degree of selflessness in suffering is almost unbelievable.



We are all called to participate in some degree or other by carrying our cross. There are many ways in which this can happen and often hidden from others. Fears, anxieties, depression and loneliness are but some and others are more manifest through illness, poverty or family issues.

This month we have the feast of the Triumph of the Cross on the 14th September. Jesus' death on the Cross is a triumph over sin and death... Also the

feast is known as the Exaltation of the Cross. We have to hold the Cross high because it is the symbol of our redemption. We were brought back to life through the suffering of Jesus which he voluntarily took upon himself at His Father's bidding. Jesus himself encouraged us to follow His lead and take up our personal crosses. 'Whoever wishes to come after Me must deny himself, take up his cross and follow Me.' (Mk 8.34).

Pope St. John Paul II, himself no stranger to suffering, said this in his Encyclical... Salvifici Doloris. (Meaning of Human Suffering):
"The Redeemer suffered in place of Man and for everyman. Everyman has his own share in the Redemption. Each one is called to share in that

suffering through which all human suffering has been redeemed. . In bringing about the redemption through suffering Christ has raised all human suffering to the level of redemption. Thus, each person in his suffering becomes a sharer in the redemptive suffering of Christ."

In the 'victim souls' such redemptive suffering takes on an intense personal form, a gift of grace often accompanied by other phenomena. Although the term victim is used widely it is perhaps only to point out this special grace that has been given. Often misunderstood or maligned it is perhaps understood better as a gift of love for God and man so great, that nothing is considered too 'big' to give to the Lord, in order to help others and bring about changes for those who have abandoned or rejected God.

Today many people suffer greatly... our times are troubled. There is much talk about the problems of youth and their lack of interest in the Church, especially in the West. The term 'The Youth' as a general statement I find rather difficult, as if they were one entity instead of people, young as they are, trying to find a way forward... Some of the Saints mentioned are people of our time and found their way to the Lord. Very recently we have been reminded of the bravery and valiant efforts of some young people and their helpfulness whether it is

'All I want to do is to get Jesus better known and to be always close to Him.'

Ven. Carlo Acutis

during the Pandemic or in places like 'Beirut', Lebanon, helping with the wounded and tidying up ... We should also recognise that the special gift of suffering is still given in abundance. There is a book written by Ann Ball 'Young faces of Holiness' (Sunday Visitor) that gives testimony to this fact and is well worth reading...

One young man who understood this special gift is called Carlo Acutis. He will be Beatified on the 10th October this year in Rome. Born on the 3rd of May 1991 he died on the 12th October 2006. Born in London his family lived in Milan where he grew up. A kind and generous child he had one outstanding gift which he utilised right up to his death at such a tender age. Gifted with all things 'computer' he wanted to use these gifts to evangelise. Considered a 'genius' in this area he set up a web site in order to distribute information about the Eucharist. Having worked at this since the age of eleven he wanted to make available the truth of The 'Real Presence' of Jesus and got together an exhibition of all the material especially on Eucharistic Miracles. This became a World Wide Apostolate and after his death other people continue to show this exhibition. This would be astonishing given His age and spiritual maturity but he did this while suffering from *Leukaemia*. His aim was to get Jesus better known and loved. He took his inspiration from Ss. Bernadette, Dominic Savio, St Francis and the two children of Fatima. Full of life and zeal he was also interested in Comic strips and films which he loved editing. Often teased for his zeal and passion he nevertheless continued with his aims, he also like to help practically where he could... He was never ashamed to go to church in spite of peer group pressure to the contrary...

There is another young man that merits attention, a young Redemptorist Brother Marcel Nguyen Tan Van, known as Marcel Van, now Servant of God, who went through many trials and mystical experiences and a 'friend' of St Thérèse of Lisieux. Always a little servant, he offered to go to serve in North Vietnam at the partitioning of the country, and was promptly arrested and tortured much by the Communists finally dying in a concentration camp at the age of thirty one.

Perhaps we can ponder what it means to Exalt the Cross and follow Jesus crucified through the lives of

some amazing young people. Grace is not restricted to any type of person- but is a gift to those with an open heart to God and others. Victims...yes, not hopeless, but filled with hope, prayer and love.

Halina Holman

Pope Francis

In greetings to young people, newlyweds, and all persons suffering illness of any kind, the Holy Father recalled the liturgical feast, connected with St. Helena's recovery of the Cross in the fourth century, and celebrated in gratitude for the redemption won for us by Christ on the Holy Cross, and in acknowledgement of the instrument of our salvation. Today, we celebrate the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. Dear young people, as you return to the regular rhythms of life after the summer holidays, strengthen your dialogue with God as well, spreading his light and his peace. If you are suffering illness, find comfort in the Cross of the Lord Jesus, who continues His work of redemption in the life of every man. Newlyweds, make the effort to maintain a constant relationship with Christ crucified, that your love might be the more true, fruitful and lasting'. Vat Radio 2019



As we celebrate your birthday dear Mother. We remember with gratitude that you stood at the foot of the Cross watching your son die. You believed that He would Rise and be glorified. Help us all realise that we are called to bear witness to the Cross, so that we can rejoice with you in Heaven. H.H.

Feasts Days in September

3rd St. Gregory the Great, Pope

6th Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time

8th Birthday of Our Lady Mary

13th Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

14th The Exaltation of the Holy Cross

15th Our Lady of Sorrows

16th St. Cyprian 17th St. Robert Bellarmine

20th Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

21st St. Matthew, Apostle

24th Our Lady of Walsingham, Our Lady of Ransom

26th Ss. Cosmos and Damian

27th Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

29th Ss. Michael, Gabriel, Raphael Archangels

30th St. Jerome,