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THE DIVINE MEASURE APPOINTED TO EVIL. A SKETCH OF INTEGRAL PROTOLOGY¹

Abstract. The article shall discuss the question of the origin of evil, limitations and contingency of creatures and moral evil. Then, it discusses the topic of evil spirit, who is a liar, and a man's wants to plunge into solitude. Finally, in the Person of the Son of God, a triumph over the liar, lies, and all evil is shown. The successive stages of this victory are the Resurrection, Ascension and joyfully awaited by Christ's friends the Last Judgment.

God in the created world, of which He is Lord and Master, permits physical and moral evil. A mystery of evil God explains us through his Son. Jesus Christ vanquishes evil, sin and Satan by his death and resurrection. The Creator would not permit an evil if he would not derive some good from that evil. This good we shall fully know only in eternal life and then we can understand the way of God's Providence.

Key words: physical evil, moral evil, suffering, nature, creation, Redemption.

Whenever something astonishes or surprises us, we want to get to know it and explain it. All that is mysterious and extraordinary draws our attention. The discovery of something new gives us joy and desire to learn more about it. Out of all the puzzles and complexities of the world, man himself has remained a great and impenetrable mystery. The "question of man" is a "great question." Perhaps, too great for himself. Therefore, man needs God, he needs His clues in order not to get entangled in the complexities of his own concerns and problems. It is not enough to rely on one's own feelings, efforts at intellectual elucidation, or guidance of others. The mature experience of the *mystery of man* should open us up to God.² If we believe in His love, care,

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² The principle that the “truth may only be found, not created” is also proved by the issue of man's self-knowledge. Cf. Joseph Ratzinger, *The Ratzinger Report: An Exclusive Interview on the State of the Church* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1985), 61.

presence and salvific plans for us, we are not left alone with the question of the meaning of suffering and cause of evil. The gravity of being man calls for a wise approach to everything we experience, to our desires and difficulties. Man has but one life, which is his only path to the Father's house.

1. WHERE DOES EVIL COME FROM?

We suffer while experiencing evil, our own faults and fleetingness, as well as the limitations of others.³ In this way we experience the consequences of the evil we endure. What we need to possess to suffer wisely is courage and support of others. The heart's openness to God's presence and acceptance of His grace lay at the foundation of this courage. Evil is not God's work. Knowing man's nature perfectly well, God realises that he is in need of support in order not to yield to the temptation of losing the meaning and joy of life under the influence of excessive suffering, which man could deem crushing and tragic. Therefore, "there is not a single aspect of the Christian message that is not in part an answer to the question of evil." [CCC 309].

Scripture tells us that the Creator made everything very good [Gen 1:31].⁴ Consequently, evil does not belong to the necessary structure of the creation,

³ Cf. Gisbert Greshake, *Dlaczego Bóg pozwala nam cierpieć?* (Kielce: Jedność, 2008); Tadeusz Kuczyński, *Dlaczego Bóg na to pozwolił? Cierpienie i zło moralne a istnienie Boga* (Płock: Płocki Instytut Wydawniczy, 2000); Juliusz Łukomski, "Dlaczego zło?" *Kieleckie Studia Teologiczne* (2003), vol. I, p. I: 201-210; Ireneusz Mroczkowski, *Zło i grzech. Studium filozoficzno-teologiczne* (Lublin: KUL, 2000); Adolphe Gesché, *Zło* (Poznań: W drodze, 2009); André Léonard, "Podstawy i zasadność wiary," *Kolekcja Communio* 1991, 140-182: "Wiara wystawiona na próbę zła"; Henryk Seweryniak, *Teologia Fundamentalna*, vol. 1 (Warszawa: Więź, 2010), 405-418: "Krzyż i cierpienie w świecie"; German Bishops' Conference, *Katolicki Katechizm Dorosłych. Wyznanie Wiary Kościoła* (Poznań: Księgarnia Świętego Wojciecha, 1987), 123-137: "Skąd zło na świecie? – O sensie historii" (esp. 127-133: "Grzech pierwszych ludzi i grzech pierwotny ludzkości").

About suffering in the Word of nature cf. Peter Van Inwagen, *Problem zła. Wykłady im. Gifforda wygłoszone na uniwersytecie St. Andrews w 2003 roku* (Bydgoszcz: UKW, 2014), 191-223: "Cierpienie Zwierząt" [Lecture 7].

⁴ St Ambrose encourages us, "[The Lord] is good Let us reach out with our hearts to possess that good, let us exist in it and live in it, let us hold fast to it, that good which is beyond all we can know or see and is marked by perpetual peace and tranquillity, a peace which is beyond all we can know or understand. . . . This is the good that permeates creation. In it we all live, on it we all depend. It has nothing above it; it is divine. No one is good but God alone. What is good is therefore divine, what is divine is therefore good. Scripture says: 'When you open your hand all things will be filled with goodness' [Ps 104:28]. It is through God's goodness that all that is truly good is given us, and in it there is no admixture of evil." St Ambrose, *Flight from the World*, 6:36; 7:44 (taken from *Office of Readings* for Saturday of the Week 2 of Lent).

because it is “good, intended and made by the One who is Good alone.”⁵ The inspired Author adds that God “fashioned all things that they might have being; and the creatures of the world are wholesome” [Wis 1:14], for “God did not make death, nor does he rejoice in the destruction of the living” [Wis 1:13]. Whatever happens in the world, “wickedness prevails not over” the Divine Wisdom, because “she reaches from end to end mightily and governs all things well” [Wis 7:30, 8:1]. The Creator will always remain above the creation and evil that it chooses will always be less than love goodness of God [cf. Gen 3].⁶

“It is not God’s mistake or bad intention” that is the source of the issue of suffering and evil, “but His in a way risky decision to make us free to have us as friends. Evil was born out of freedom.”⁷ For this reason, J. Ratzinger would stress that we cannot understand evil as the fruit of creation, because it does not “possess its own reality, which could lead its own existence, for it essentially consists of negation eating away at the substance of creation.”⁸ Endowing man with freedom, as in the case of angels, made us able to love our Creator consciously, to freely choose God as our Father, Guardian and Teacher. At the same time, this freedom presents us the opportunity to choose evil. The Creator set limits for the elements: “And who shut within doors the sea, when it burst forth from the womb? When I set limits for it and fastened the bar of its door, and said: ‘Thus far shall you come but no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stilled!’” [Job 38:8;10-11].

⁵ Christoph Schönborn, “Podstawowe prawdy nauki Kościoła o grzechu pierworodnym,” in Christoph Schönborn, Albert Görres, Robert Spaemann, *Grzech pierworodny w nauczaniu Kościoła* (Poznań: W drodze, 1997), 61.

⁶ Cf. Paul Deselaers, Dorota Sattler, *I stało się światło. 40 rozważań o dziele stworzenia* (Poznań: Św. Wojciech, 2009), 55ff.: “Z czasem wdziera się ciemność.”

⁷ John Paul II, “Zwycięstwo Chrystusa nad złym duchem,” in John Paul II, *Katechezy Ojca Świętego Jana Pawła II. Bóg Ojciec* (Kraków-Ząbki: M, 1999), no. 67, 5. Despite that, “God does not give up and, having predestined us to be His children in Christ, guides everything with His transcendent wisdom.”

⁸ Joseph Ratzinger, *God and the World: Believing and Living in Our Time* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2002), 128. The Cardinal went on to say that evil “is not a kind of being – for being can indeed originate only from the wellspring of being – but a negative. That the negative can be so powerful is bound to shock us. ... [It is] comforting to know that evil is not a kind of creature but is more like a parasitic plant. It live on what it takes out of the other being, and in the end it kills itself off, just as surely as a parasitic plant does when it completely dominates its host and kills it.” Finally, Ratzinger claims that “Evil is not something with its own nature, its own being, but is simply negation. And when I take a step into evil, I leave the realm of the positive development of being in favor of the status of a parasite, of the corrosion of being and the negation of being.”

Likewise, He will set limit for evil which entered the world through devil's envy [cf. Wis 2:24].

2. LIMITATION AND ACCIDENTALITY OF CREATION VS MORAL EVIL

To express our subject explicitly, we shall introduce a distinction between physical and moral evil.⁹ Physical evil does not have to result directly from man's free will. However, it may sometimes be caused by him and in that sense it is culpable. Man may trigger physical evil by the lack of knowledge, prudence, carelessness, negligence or directly through harmful deeds. Otherwise, it may occur regardless of man's activity. "Suffice to mention various natural disasters or catastrophes, as well numerous disabilities or somatic or mental illnesses,"¹⁰ which man has no control of. We also have to bear in mind that there are such types of physical evil that stem from the structure of accidental beings, which were created by God. These beings are unnecessary, transient, prone to destruction.¹¹ The structure of mutually independent material beings assumes, as it were, these features, or even the principle that the death of some conditions the life of others. It is natural for all created beings, while for man it serves as the testimony that in his being he refers to God and he needs God in order to come to being¹² and last.

⁹ Ch. Schönborn writes that evil "is not part of the 'history of nature' but the 'history of freedom.' What pertains to the 'history of nature' is obviously, at least partially, physical kinds of evil, which should be set apart from moral evil. They are not directly contrary to the design of creation. The world was not made as ultimately fulfilled. It remains *in statu viae*, on the way to the final goal, which lies beyond his own abilities." Schönborn, „Podstawowe nauki,” 61.

¹⁰ John Paul II, "Opatrzność Boża a obecność zła i cierpienia w świecie," in John Paul II I, *Katechezy*, no. 58, 3.

¹¹ W. Breuning speaks about the existence of certain laws that determine, order and equip it with the feature of measurability. In his opinion, "these laws are neither good nor bad in themselves, they bring neither benefit nor harm – they simply enable the world to happen in the way it does. But the world is limited and thereby imperfect. To demand its absolute and inept perfection would mean to demand the world to be identical to God. The consequence of the imperfection, as expressed in the notion of the world and creation (as the work of God, which itself is not divine) is that despite all unquestionable blessings, something we call a catastrophe may come to be, from an earthquake, to a dam failure, to a car accident, or a completely trivial (though at times deadly) illness." Wilhelm Breuning, "Nauka o Bogu," in *Podręcznik teologii dogmatycznej*, Treatise II, ed. Wolfgang Beinert (Kraków: M, 1999), 238. Cf. *Ibid.*, 230-42: "Nędza egzystencjalna wiary w Boga, który jest miłością – problem teodycei."

¹² The sole fact of our coming to being testifies to our "election" by God and of our great vocation. "God chose man at the very moment of creation. In Adam the creator chose all man [cf. Acts

The second type is moral evil.¹³ It is culpable. It is the consequence of human decisions, thus it has a spiritual dimension. It is a sin. It results in guilt and its consequences in various forms, including the physical order. God does not want this type of evil. It opposes the Creator's will. "On the part of Divine Providence, it is allowed due to the fact that God wishes that freedom existed in the created world. ... With respect to the fullness of goodness that God wishes to realise in creation, the existence of free creatures is more fundamental than the fact that these creatures may use their freedom against the Creator, or that freedom entails moral evil."¹⁴ It is still true that according to the providential plan of God for His creation, any evil is ultimately subordinated to certain goodness. It is thereby limited by the Divine plan of salvation of man and renewal of the world.

3. THE SPIRIT OF LIE AND LONELINESS

Evil and death entered the world by the work of the devil [Wis 2:24].¹⁵ Evil "becomes the occasion and the effect of interference in us and our work by a dark, hostile agent, the Devil."¹⁶ The Church believes that "the devil and the other demons were indeed created by God good by nature but they became bad through themselves."¹⁷ Thus, apart from the existence of physical and moral evil, we should note personal evil. Paul VI reminded the faithful that "Evil is not merely an absence of something but an active force, a living, spiritual being that is perverted and that perverts others. It is

17:26]. Creation is the primary choice (from nothingness to being). This choice was confirmed by the Redemption carried out in 'one person Jesus Christ' [Rom 5:15]. Christ's blood was shed 'on behalf of many' [Mt 26:28, Mk 12:24]. Therefore, God did everything to 'elect' man ultimately (to save him). What is left is man's decision about his personal participation and the reception of the 'Divine election' [cf. Deut 30:19-20]. Sławomir Kunka, "Teologia wybrania." Kilka myśli na temat wybrania człowieka przez Boga, *Teologia w Polsce* 5 (2011), no. 1, 238-9.

¹³ Cf. Breuning, "Nauka o Boga," 238-9.

¹⁴ John Paul II, „Opatrzność Boża,” 7. In that sense "Christian faith affirms that God allows moral evil." Cf. CCC 309-314.

¹⁵ Cf. Giorgio Agamben, *Il mistero del Male. Benedetto XVI a la fine dei tempi* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2013), 54-9: „Il diavolo e il suo corpo.”

¹⁶ Paul VI, *General Audience November 15, 1972*, <https://www.ewtn.com/library/papaldoc/p6devil.htm> [November 11, 2016].

¹⁷ The Canons of the Fourth Lateran Council, 1215, I, <http://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/latran4.asp> [November 11, 2016]. The Latin text reads: "*Diabolus enim et daemones alii a Deo quidem natura creati sunt boni, sed ipsi per se facti sunt mali.*"

a terrible reality, mysterious and frightening.”¹⁸ Hence, in the context of the devil and other evil spirits we may speak of personal evil, or, to be exact, of anti-persons. Being a person constitutes the image and likeness of the Triune, who is love [Gen 1:26-27, 1 Jn 4:8]. It also invites us to love, to the communion with God and man. The world of demons rejected God and definitely broke up the communion with Him. In this way evil spirits made themselves condemned.

The devil, who was “a murderer from the beginning and d[id] not stand in truth” [Jn 8:44] and “sinned from the beginning” [1 Jn 3:8], wants to destroy the harmony and order of God’s world exactly by lying and convincing man of their loneliness. The complete opposition of the work of the “father of lies” [cf. J 8:44] is the work of the Holy Spirit: “For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you received a spirit of adoption, through which we cry, ‘Abba, Father!’” [Rom 8:15]; “As proof that you are children, God sent the spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying out, ‘Abba, Father!’” [Gal 4:6].

The evil spirit knows perfectly well that he is subject to God. Limit set for his lie is the revelation of Father’s love for all creatures in Christ, because “the Son of God was revealed to destroy the works of the devil” [1 Jn 3:8]. The moment the world fully accepts Christ, the devil will be unable to destroy anything more [Jn 1:11, Phil 2:9-11] and no one will let him deceive themselves.

4. THE REDEMPTION THROUGH THE FIRSTBORN SON

Reflecting on what is going on in the world, we cannot lose sight of the basic truth that lies at the foundation of our existence, meaning of life and goal of our earthly pilgrimage. The truth is “God is love” [1 Jn 4:8]. Even if we see the suffering of the innocent, harm of the defenceless or death of the unborn. History teaches us and irrefutably proves that evil, the lies and sins of tyrants are not enough to cause a tragedy, injustice or great harm to man (or even whole mankind). What is needed is also the indifference of “good, righteous and holy” people. God is not indifferent to man, his misery and suffering. He is not indifferent to the loneliness man experiences painfully [cf. Gen 2:18].

¹⁸ Paul VI, *General Audience November 15, 1972*.

The passion of the Saviour is deeply ingrained in the history of human suffering. “He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead” [Col 1:18]. For Him His own passion and death are significant motivation to commend Himself [Lk 23:46]. He states: “This is why the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again” [Jn 10:17]. Jesus is far from affirming that he will be the victim of evil, lie, envy and death. “No one takes [life] from me, but I lay it down on my own. I have power to lay it down, and power to take it up again” [Jn 10:18]. He simply loves the Father and always wishes to be obedient to Him.

For this reason, “the power of Christ’s Cross and Resurrection is always greater than any evil,”¹⁹ which may be performed on the earth. John Paul II reminds us that “*The Redemption restores*, in a sense, at its very root, the good that was essentially ‘diminished’ by sin and its heritage in human history.”²⁰ The Redeemer’s Cross precedes our crosses, and His victory is the source of strength during our struggle with sin and death.²¹ We are His friends. He has confirmed this friendship, laying down His life for us. “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” [Jn 15:13]. In the name of this friendship he calls for our requited love and respect. “This is my commandment: love one another as I love you” [Jn 15:12]. The Redeemer not only strives for it, but also supports us in that love. We have yet to pay attention to what Jesus says about the relationship between the suffering resulting from human limitation and illness and Divine Providence. Asked by his disciples about the source of the suffering of a man blind from birth, he answered: “Neither he nor his parents sinned; it is so that the works of God might be made visible through him” [Jn 9:3]. He healed this man. Afterwards, He explained to the disciples that their mission consist in carrying out the Father’s works “while it is day.” At the same time, He warned that “Night is coming when no one can work” [Jn 9:4]. In this way, Jesus announces the time of His passion and death. Then it will be the Father who will have the final word.

On a different occasion, upon being informed about “the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with the blood of their sacrifices” [Lk 13:1], Jesus

¹⁹ John Paul II, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 219.

²⁰ John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Mulieris Dignitatem* [August 15, 1988], no. 11, https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_letters/1988/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_19880815_mulieris-dignitatem.html [November 11, 2016].

²¹ Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical *Dominum et Vivificantem*, no. 39-41: “The Spirit Who Transforms Suffering into Salvific Love.”

posed a question: “Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were greater sinners than all other Galileans?” [Lk 13:2]. A little later, He Himself mentioned another accident: “Those eighteen people who were killed when the tower at Siloam fell on them – do you think they were more guilty than everyone else who lived in Jerusalem?” [Lk 13:4]. In both cases, the answer must be negative, which Jesus confirms, adding: “If you do not repent, you will all perish as they did!” [Lk 13:3, cf. v. 5].

Even before hearing His very own unjust sentence, before His undeserved passion and death, Christ presents that we cannot connect illnesses or accidents with God’s punishment. They are a mystery, which can be elucidated only by faith in Divine Providence, which reveals His issues in various ways, in order to save us.²²

5. THE RESURRECTION, ASCENSION AND COMING OF THE SAVIOUR TO THE JUDGEMENT

The final chords of the Son’s song of love were written by the Father.²³ They took the form of the Resurrection of Christ and His exaltation [Eph 1:10].

²² In this study we have left off the issue of the so-called mystery of sinners’ prosperity [cf. Ps 73], as well as the analysis of the relationship between the life of a moral man and the physical, mental and spiritual condition of his health [cf. Jn 5:14, Lk 5:20-26].

²³ We have also omitted the issue of the so-called God’s suffering. Cf. Benedict XVI, Encyclical *Spe salvi*, no. 39; Waclaw Hryniewicz, *Pascha Chrystusa w dziejach człowieka i wszechświata. Zarys chrześcijańskiej teologii paschalnej*, vol. 3 (Lublin: TN KUL, 1991), 262-84: “Bóg cierpiących ludzi”; Izabella Smentek, “Cierpienie Boga – współczesny kontekst teologiczny,” in *Człowieczeństwo Boga*, ed. Andrzej Proniewski, Andrzej Dębski (Białystok: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu, 2013), 139-174; Jan D. Szczurek, *Trójjedyny. Traktat o Bogu w Trójcy Świętej Jedynym* (2nd edition, Kraków: PAT, 2003), 287-91: “Cierpienie Boga”; Jerzy Szymik, *W światłach Wcielenia. Chrystologia kultury* (Katowice-Ząbki: Księgarnia Św. Jacka, 2004), 139-47: “*Passibilis vel impassibilis?* Bóg współcierpiący”; Jerzy Szymik, “*Deus providebit*. Bóg wobec cierpienia według J. Ratzingera /Benedykta XVI,” *Teologia w Polsce* 5 (2011), no. 1: 5-22; Ireneusz Mroczkowski, *Zło i grzech. Studium filozoficzno-teologiczne* (Lublin: KUL, 2000), 280-83: “Wobec cierpienia Boga”; Thomas G. Weinandy, *Czy Bóg cierpi?* (Poznań: W drodze, 2003); Ysabel de Andia, “Cierpienie Chrystusa cierpieniem Boga,” *Communio* (1984), no. 1(19): 71-81; François Euvé, *Darwin i chrześcijaństwo* (Kraków: WAM, 2010), 175-80: “Bóg podatny na cierpienie”; Henri de Lubac, *O naturze i łasce* (Kraków: Znak, 1986), 79-85: “Zło a historia.”

It is worth stressing here, however, citing B. Forte, that “the ‘suspicion’ of God being tainted with compassion and attention paid to the history of mankind is of Greek origin. God’s unchangeability may be understood only biblically, as God’s unchangeable ‘faithfulness’ to the promises made.” Krzysztof Guzowski, *Symbolika trynitarna Brunona Fortego* (Lublin: KUL, 2004), 212, footnote 18. More cf. Bruno Forte, *Gesù di Nazaret, storia di Dio, Dio della storia. Saggio di una cristologia come storia* (Milano: San Paolo, 1981), 184.

When the morning of the Resurrection had come, the whole world, together with the Redeemer, was renewed to new life [Acts 13:33]. This does not mean that death ceased to exist, but man was shown that he has a place to go after death, that he has the Father in heaven. In the book *Memory & Identity* John Paul II stated: “The resurrection of Christ clearly illustrated that only the measure of good introduced by God into history through the mystery of Redemption is sufficient to correspond fully to the truth of the human being.”²⁴

The Passion, Resurrection and Ascension of Christ have become “the definitive measure of man’s existence in the world created by God.”²⁵ The Pope even acknowledged that rising from the dead, Christ “has so to speak ‘justified’ the work of creation, and especially the creation of man,” because “he revealed the ‘the just measure’ of good intended by God at the beginning of human existence.”²⁶ This measure was moreover fulfilled by Christ in the work of Redemption. The limits of all injustice and harm were set by the Father while raising His Son from the dead and granting Him the place at His right hand [Acts 2:33, Phil 2:9]: now not only as the Son of God, but as Jesus Christ “born of a woman” [Gal 4:4]. Christ’s departure to the Father means the beginning of a new fatherland in the history of all fatherlands and all man.²⁷ In fact, he went to prepare a place for us in the Father’s house [Jn 14:2].

Jesus also taught His disciples that the Father does not “judge anyone, but he has given all judgment to his Son” [Jn 5:22]. He did it because He loves Him so that “all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father” [Jn 5:23]. The second coming of the Saviour into the world will be nothing else than an obvious and universal revelation of the truth and love of God for His creatures. The Saviour will fulfil the prophecies: “He will destroy death forever. The Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces; the reproach of His people He will remove from the whole earth; for the Lord has spoken” [Isa 25:8]. The Lamb will “lead them to springs of life-giving water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes” [Rev 7:17], and also: “He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, for the old order has passed away” [Rev 21:4]. The Son of God will utter the final word to the sermon from the Mountain. He will reward and fulfil the blessings for the meek, merciful, pure-hearted and persecuted [My 5:3-12]. He will announce their victory.

²⁴ John Paul II, *Memory & Identity. Conversations at the Dawn of a Millennium* (New York, Rizzoli, 2005), 25.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Cf. Ibid., 69.

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When we see wars, fratricides, unpunished legislation of laws that destroy human dignity, economically-programmed offenders, insincerity of the minions of the law and the judiciary, it is rather hard to understand it all and find its meaning. The image of the world, sketched by such phenomena, is sad and a man living in it is burdened with the responsibility for the destruction of a creative harmony and goodness of God's works. However, the Creator knows well that despite it all, it was worth creating man. For when man lets his Lord and Father lead him, he is able to do many things, including laying down his life for the truth, for the love of God. Man may accept and respond to the calling of God's love. He may become an instrument of the Holy Spirit and bring life, multiply God's glory in the created world.

We need this love, but we cannot reduce it to the level of our human love. God loves always and unconditionally. He neither forgets nor resigns; He wishes to prove to us that we are weak. He wishes that we would understand that despite our faults and imperfections, He will not leave us. Man lives within a given history. It ensures a certain quality of our existence. It is marked by physical pain, exhaustion, fleetingness, split-ups and longing. The suffering we have experienced may make us stronger in faith and hope. It may enable us to put a perspective on what we have no control of. It may also help us enjoy what we have and focus only on what is important. "For this momentary light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to what is seen but to what is unseen" [2 Cor 4:17-18]. In the dimension of the earthly life, the limit set to evil is our agreement on having God as our Father, Guardian and Saviour. "For in hope we were saved" [Rom 8:24].

Our experience of suffering, being with a suffering person, thinking about him or her, seeing its realness, accepting it and finally, offering God the love, which makes it possible to get through it, are all steeped with the Holy Spirit, the love of the Father and the Son. For God's friends "evil ... is neither fundamental nor definitive."²⁸ In the beginning the world existed without it, and when God is finally "all in all" [1 Cor 15:28], there will again be no evil and it will never return. Only God, who is love, will remain. Reaching such conclusions is simply the result of a integral take on the

²⁸ John Paul II, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, 20.

dogma of creation, which already in God's creational design sees the victory over sin and death, won by God's Son, born of the Virgin [cf. Gen 3:15].

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