

# faithhelps

By Paulette Burgess  
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## A Learning Companion to FAITH Magazine

### Discussion: Making Sense out of Suffering

*"Not only do we only know God through Jesus Christ, but we only know ourselves through Jesus Christ; we only know life and death through Jesus Christ. Apart from Jesus Christ we cannot know the meaning of life or our death, of God or of ourselves."*

– Blaise Pascal (French philosopher and mathematician, 1623-1662)

In chapter seven of his book, *Making Sense out of Suffering*, Peter Kreeft explains that Jesus Christ is "the only adequate answer to our problem of man's suffering and God's silence ... Christ is the Word of God, the answer of God ... For the problem (suffering) is about someone (God – why dos he.. why doesn't he..?) rather than just something" (129).

### 7 questions about suffering

- 1 Do you agree with the statement, "God leaves us room to be human"?
- 2 What are some of the results of our free will?
- 3 Should we be angry with God when our own actions cause pain and suffering?
- 4 Should we be angry with God if the actions of others cause us pain and suffering?
- 5 Do you agree with the statement, "Good can come from bad"?
- 6 Can you think of any real life examples where something positive resulted from a devastating occurrence?
- 7 Do you agree that Jesus Christ is the only adequate answer to suffering? Why or why not?

### 3 things to ask yourself

- 1 Do you hold God solely responsible for your happiness, peace and good health?
- 2 What happens when you experience hard times? Is this God's fault?
- 3 When was the last time you thanked God for the beauty and goodness in your life? Or do you only call out to Him when you are in pain, in trouble or scared asking, pleading, begging, even bargaining for an end?

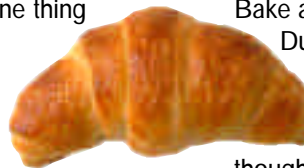
### Activity: Breaking the Bread of Thanksgiving

Baking and breaking bread together may help to remind us of life's blessings. For this activity, you will need:

**Pillsbury refrigerated crescent rolls**  
**12 strips of 3 x 1 inch paper**  
**Black or blue pen**  
(marker tends to run and blur)

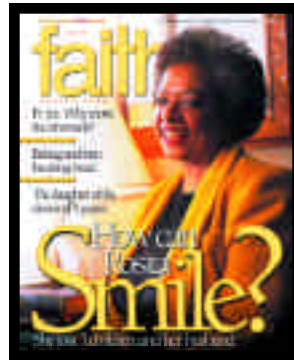
Ask each family member to clearly

write on the paper one thing they are thankful for. Continue until all 12 pieces are filled out. Roll one strip into each crescent roll before baking, making sure all edges of the paper are covered by dough.



Bake as directed.

During the meal ask each family member to carefully pull apart their dinner roll and share with each other the thankful thoughts. Don't forget to end the meal with a prayer thanking our resurrected Savior for all He has given to us.



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## The Mystery of Suffering

### Lesson: Suffering demands trust in God

Scripture gives us dozens of examples where people have suffered at the hands of others yet found only the good in those actions. From the Books of Genesis and Job in the Old Testament we can read two extraordinary stories of good resulting from bad. Joseph faced cruel treatment at the hands of his brothers as they sold him into slavery in Egypt. Rather than feel hatred and contempt for his brothers he looked at the big picture, "But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, to achieve his present end for you and for your children" (Gen 50:20).

In the Book of Job, Job was tested to the *n*th degree. He lost his wife, his children, his farm and his health yet he never lost sight of his faith. **Job was wise enough to know that God alone knows why innocent people suffer and one must truly trust in His wisdom.** "But it is the spirit in the mortal breath of the Almighty that makes for understanding" (Job 32:8).

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### Spiritual Fitness: 3 ways to increase your hunger for heavenly food



**I**srael was delivered by God from Egypt, but the people were not all that happy about it. They were hungry in the desert, but for the wrong kind of food. They still hungered for Egypt! They complained “would that we had died at the Lord’s hand in the land of Egypt, as we sat by our fleshpots and ate our fill of bread! But You had to lead us into this desert to make the whole community die of famine!” (Exodus 16:3)

God heard their cry. He did not want them to starve to death, but to hunger for the right kind of food. God sent them manna – a bread-like substance to eat all the days of their journey right up until they entered the promised land. Manna was their food in exile.

We are in exile too, and Jesus does not want us to starve either. Many times we hunger for the wrong things, and end up filling ourselves with junk food that kills the soul.

Growing in our awareness of the real food God provides is essential for spiritual fitness. We need to be hungry for God! If we are not spiritually hungry for the food God provides, we are not spiritually healthy.

Jesus said, “I am the Living Bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this Bread will live forever. The Bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world.” (John 6:51)

Mystery of mysteries! The bread we share at Mass is Jesus Christ! Many disciples could not take this teaching and left Jesus. Many today still say, “How can this man give us His flesh to eat?” (John 6:52) Jesus was not just a man, and the Eucharist we share in as Catholics is not just bread. It is His Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity substantially present to us under the disguise of bread and wine. Jesus asked the apostles if they wanted to leave, too. Peter said, “Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of everlasting life.” (John 6:68) I pray God will grant us the grace to say the same thing.

When people looked upon Jesus, they were seeing God come in the flesh. Not everyone could recognize that Jesus was God. It required a gift of faith from God. When we look upon the bread and wine after the consecration, we are looking upon Jesus Christ coming to us as the Living Bread from heaven. Not everyone believes this, and because of this, they miss out on the real food that gives eternal life. They miss out on the holy hunger!

That is what I call being hungry for Jesus in the Eucharist! It is holy hunger!

Do you want this hunger? Then do the following exercises. We all know what it is like to be hungry after exercise. The same thing will happen to us spiritually when we exercise our spirits! We will be given the gift of holy hunger.

**1 Receive Jesus in the Eucharist with love and devotion at Mass. Give yourself to Him. Prepare well to receive Him. Pray: “Lord, I am hungry for you. Increase my hunger, so that I may say, ‘I do not live on bread alone, but on Jesus, my Bread of Life.’”**

**2 Visit Jesus present at church in the Blessed Sacrament.** He is there for us. Our adoration of His Presence will help us grow in our awareness of His presence, will increase our hunger for Him, will help us better participate in the Mass, and will help us be His body and blood for others. To begin: Sit, kneel, lie prostrate on the ground, or stand before Him. Whatever is most appropriate for you before God. Say His name in prayer: “Jesus. Jesus I love you, Jesus I adore you, Jesus I believe in you.” Repeat often, but say it each time like you really mean it. Listen to Jesus ask you these questions ... *Why do you love Me? Why do you adore Me? Why do you believe in Me?* Talk to Jesus present before you. Tell Him why. Repeat the prayer as often as you desire. Your hunger will grow!

**3 End your time with Jesus by praying the following litany:**

*Jesus, Bread that is broken for me, increase my hunger for You.*

*Jesus, Bread of angels, increase my hunger for You.*

*Jesus, Bread sent from the Father, increase my hunger for You.*

*Jesus, Bread of Life, increase my hunger for You.*

*Jesus, Bread of Eternal Thanksgiving, increase my hunger for You.*

*Jesus, Bread of Eternal Praise, increase my hunger for You.*

*Jesus, Bread of Divine Mercy, increase my hunger for You.*

*Jesus, Bread of Divine Love, increase my hunger for You.*

*Jesus, Bread of Hope, increase my hunger for You.*

*Jesus, Bread of unity, increase my hunger for You.*

*Jesus, Bread of Your Body and Blood, increase my hunger for You.*

*Jesus, Bread of Humility, increase my hunger for You.*

*Jesus, Bread of Purity, increase my hunger for You.*

*Jesus, Bread of Innocence, increase my hunger for You.*

*Jesus, Bread of Poverty, increase my hunger for You.*

*Jesus, Bread of Obedience, increase my hunger for You.*

*Jesus, Bread of Strength for the living, increase my hunger for You.*

*Jesus, Bread from heaven for the dying, increase my hunger for You.*

*Jesus, I love You; Jesus, I adore You; Jesus, I believe in You.*

*Have mercy on me a sinner. Amen*

– Fr. Bill Ashbaugh is pastor of St. Joseph Parish, Howell.