

FEBRUARY 11, 2025 FATHER PETER TURRONE

“God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good.”

My brothers and sisters, today we celebrate the memorial of Our Lady of Lourdes, and the World Day of Prayer for the Sick. In the first reading, God reveals to the Jewish people, and by extension, to all of us, that he created everything out of good. And everything he created was meant to be a glorification of God. So, it's a manifestation of his goodness. So we have this beautiful revelation, and it's important to also recognize the fact that when the Jewish people receive this revelation, they were living, and surrounded by cultures that had a very different view of reality. They saw suffering, they saw evil in the world, so from there, they deduced that in fact, there was a battle between different gods, there were demi-gods, good bads-- good gods, bad gods, that were fighting with one another, and creation emerged from there. So, from this battle in the universe. But that's not true. In fact, again, what we hear from God, right, through his prophet, is that everything was good.

So then, the question is the following: Why is there sickness? Why, if God created everything good, and beautiful, and perfect, do we have sickness? This is the perennial question. And this is what is a stumbling block, understandably so, for people that see the faith, and they want to become part of the Church, but then they have this struggle. Like, why do bad things happen? Why is there illness, why do children get sick? Again, in the mystery of God's providence, we have to be very careful, and tread very lightly when we go there, because there are certain things that we cannot know. On this side of heaven. But what we do know, and what the Church has taught, and the Catechism reaffirms, is that as long as Adam was in the divine intimacy, then human person would not have to suffer and die. So that means that prior to the fall of Adam and Eve,

that there was no death, and there was no sickness. But what we see is, immediately after the fall, death and sickness enter into the human story, into this drama of salvation.

But we also know that God promises that he's going to send his Son. And his Son is the one who is going to come, and to save us. And therefore, in this drama, right, of human suffering, we recognize, by looking at the cross, that even though we may not always have a personal answer, as to why I'm suffering, why you're suffering, why this innocent child is suffering, what we can do it the Father shows us his Son on the cross. And he says, this is the answer to the question of suffering.

And Saint John Paul II, when he instituted this day, the World Day of Prayer for the Sick, he reminds us of this reality. He himself was a man who endured much sickness throughout his life. You know, he almost died after he was shot. He had a neurological condition, which crippled him, right, physically. And yet he wrote so beautifully on the mystery of suffering. And he said it's through suffering, what we can say, because there's a lot that's been said about this, but what we can say and what we can know for sure, is that God will not allow suffering unless he'll draw a greater good from this. Again, do we understand always why specifically in our case? No.

But, we know someone we can trust. And the Lord wants, also, to heal many people. Also on a physical level, not just internally. And we can see this when he sent the Virgin Mary, to Lourdes, when she appeared to Saint Bernadette. And there's this beautiful exchange. And then, in the different revelations that she received, the Virgin Mary said to her, I do not promise you happiness now, but in heaven. And when she went off to the convent, she was there, and she was very sick. She had this

crippling pain from this condition, which she hid from everyone else. But she had offered that to God. And nobody knew that she was sick. And so, the words of the Virgin Mary, kind of remained within her heart. But she trusted, and she knew that God would draw much good from this. And God does. Spiritually, and also physically.

Again, if you go to Lourdes, we were there on pilgrimage last year, there were many, many cases of people receiving both physical, and spiritual healings. The spiritual ones are harder to kind of ascertain, from a scientific perspective, but you can certainly do it from a medical perspective. And there are many of them, and one of them, most recently, I think, was a nun, and she wrote a book about this. She was a French nun, and she was in awe of the fact that God gave her this great gift. And she doesn't understand why... She said, But I am an old woman, why am I receiving this, when younger people aren't? Again, it's part of this mystery we cannot understand, but we're called to trust. And we know, as the Virgin Mary promised to Bernadette, and during this year of Jubilee of Hope, that we have someone who's waiting for us on the other side. And that's Jesus Christ, Mary, and all the saints. And my prayer for all of us is that one day, through our suffering, that all of us will be there.