Suffering and Sickness

Mystic Knowledge Series

Compiled and Written by Marilynn Hughes

The Out-of-Body Travel Foundation!

www.outofbodytravel.org

St. Benedict Standing Over Sick Man

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Having worked primarily in radio broadcasting, Marilynn Hughes spent several years as a news reporter, producer and anchor before deciding to stay at home with her three children. She's experienced, researched, written, and taught about out-of-body travel since 1987.

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INTRODUCTION:

The Mystic Knowledge Series is a group of compilations of the Mystic and Out-of-Body Travel Works of Marilynn Hughes on various subjects of scholarship so you may have at your fingertips all the Out-of-Body Travel Instructions on a particular area of study.

As many experiences would overlap into more than one area, we've chosen the best category for each Out-of-Body Travel Experience in which to place it in order to avoid repetition.

We hope this series helps those who are interested in a special area of study to read all the recorded mystical and out-of-body travel experiences that the author had on each subject.

These experiences are compiled from 'Come to Wisdom's Door: How to Have an Out-of-Body Experience,' 'The Mysteries of the Redemption: A Treatise on Out-of-Body Travel and Mysticism,' 'Galactica: A Treatise on Death, Dying and the Afterlife,' 'The Palace of Ancient Knowledge: A Treatise on Ancient Mysteries,' 'Touched by the Nails: A Karmic Journey Revealed,' 'Suffering: The Fruits of Utter Desolation,' and a few other published and unpublished sources.

PART I
When Tragedy Strikes

What can I possibly say to you in light of Suffering and Sickness in our world? All I could think of was silence . . . nothing . . . emptiness . . . but one strand of thought kept rippling through my mind which was this. "What is there to say except to make a profound restatement of our faith?"

Incidents like these happen throughout time and history and great minds have said great things. Among them are these:

"It is only when our rights are invaded or seriously menaced that we resent injuries or make preparation for our defense." ***President James Monroe***

"The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us - that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion - that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain, that this nation under God shall have a new birth . . . With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan - to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves, and with all nations." ***President Abraham Lincoln***

"I am tired; my heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands, I shall fight no more forever." ***Chief Joseph, Nez Perce***

From the Funeral Oration for President Garfield, 2/27/1882: "Garfield was slain in a day of peace, when brother had been reconciled to brother, and when anger and hate had been banished from the land. Great in life, he was surprisingly great in death. For no cause, in the very frenzy of wantonness and wickedness, by the red hand of murder, he was thrust from the full tide of this world's interest, from its hopes, its aspirations, its victories, into the visible presence of death - and he did not quail. Not alone for one short moment in which, stunned and dazed, he could give up life, hardly aware of its relinquishment, but through days of deadly languor, through weeks of agony, that was not less agony because silently borne, with clear sight and calm courage he looked into the open grave. What blight and ruin met his anguished eyes, whose lips may tell; what brilliant, broken plans, what baffled, high ambitions, what sunder of strong, warm manhood's friendship, what bitter rending of sweet household ties! Behind him a proud, expectant nation, a great host of sustaining friends, a cherished and happy mother, wearing the full, rich honors of her early toil and tears; the wife of his youth, whose whole life lay in his; the little boys not yet emerged from childhood's day of frolic; the fair young daughter; the sturdy sons just springing into closest companionship, claiming every day and every day rewarding a father's love and care; and in his heart the eager, rejoicing power to meet all demands. And his soul was not shaken. His countrymen were thrilled with instant, profound and universal sympathy." ***James G. Blaine***

"In Bunyan's 'The Pilgrim's Progress' you may recall the description of the 'man with a muck rake,' the man who could look no way but downward, with the muck rake in his hand; who was offered a celestial crown for his muck rake, but who

would neither look up nor regard the crown he was offered, but continued to rake himself the filth of the floor. In 'The Pilgrim's Progress' the man with the muck rake is set forth as the example of him whose vision is fixed on carnal instead of spiritual things. Yet he also typifies the man who in this life consistently refuses to see aught that is lofty, and fixes his eyes with solemn intentness only on that which is vile and debasing. Now, it is very necessary that we should not flinch from seeing what is vile and debasing. There is filth on the floor, and it must be scraped up with the muck rake: and there are times where this service is the most needed of all the services that can be performed. But the man who never does anything else, who never thinks or speaks or writes, save of his feats with the muck rake, speedily becomes, not a help but one of the most potent forces for evil . . . The foundation-stone of national life is, and ever must be, the high individual character of the average citizen." ***President Theodore Roosevelt***

"The world must be made safe for democracy . . . It is a fearful thing to lead this great peaceful people into war." ***President Woodrow Wilson***

"I believe you can do nothing with hatred . . . I believe in the law of love." ***Clarence Darrow, Attorney During the Civil Rights Movement***

"Where there is no vision the people perish . . . We must act and act quickly. We face the arduous days that lie before us in the warm courage of national unity, with the clear consciousness of seeking old and precious moral values, with the clean satisfaction that comes from the stern performance of duty by old and young alike." ***President Franklin D. Roosevelt***

"You are not all going to die. Only two percent of you right here today would die in a major battle. Death must not be

feared. Death, in time, comes to all men. Yes, every man is scared in his first battle. If he says he's not, he's a liar. Some men are cowards but they fight the same as the brave men or they get the hell slammed out of them watching men fight who are just as scared as they are. The real hero is a man who fights even though he is scared . . . " ***General George S. Patton Jr.***

"We must assist free peoples to work out their own destinies in their own way." ***President Harry S. Truman***

"I know war as few other men now living know it, and nothing to me is more revolting." ***General Douglas MacArthur***

"Let us never negotiate out of fear. But let us never fear to negotiate." ***President John F. Kennedy***

"I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, and every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together . . . Free at last, free at last. Thank God Almighty, we are free at last." ***Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.***

"These are the enemies: poverty, ignorance, disease. They are our enemies, not our fellow man, not our neighbor. And these enemies, too - poverty, disease and ignorance - we shall overcome." ***President Lyndon B. Johnson***

"Why should they ask me to put on a uniform and go 10,000 miles from home and drop bombs and bullets on brown people in Vietnam while so-called Negro people in Louisville are treated like dogs and denied simple human rights? No, I'm not going 10,000 miles from home to help murder and burn another poor nation simply to continue the domination of white slave masters of the darker people the world over. This is the day when such evils must come to an end. I have been

warned that to take such a stand would cost me millions of dollars. But I have said it once and I will say it again. The real enemy of my people is here. I will not disgrace my religion, my people, or myself by becoming a tool to enslave those who are fighting for their own justice, freedom and equality. If i thought the war was going to bring freedom and equality to 22 million of my people, they wouldn't have to draft me, I'd join tomorrow. I have nothing to lose by standing up for my beliefs. So I'll go to jail, so what? We've been in jail for 400 years."
Muhammad Ali, Boxer

"My favorite poem, my favorite poet was Aeschylus. And he once wrote:

'Even in our sleep, pain which cannot forget

Falls drop by drop upon the heart,

Until in our own despair,

Against our will, comes wisdom

Through the awful grace of God.'

What we need in the United States is not division; what we need in the United States is not hatred; what we need in the United States is not violence and lawlessness: but is love and wisdom, and compassion toward one another, and a feeling of justice toward those who still suffer within our own country."
Senator Robert F. Kennedy

"You have lost too much, but you have not lost everything . . . A tree takes a long time to grow, and wounds take a long time to heal. But we must begin." ***President Bill Clinton after Oklahoma City Bombing 4/23/1995***

"Indifference is always the friend of the enemy . . . Indifference can be tempting - more than that, seductive. It is so much easier to look away from victims. It is so much easier to avoid such rude interruptions to our work, our dreams, our hopes. It is, after all, awkward, troublesome, to be involved in another person's pain and despair. Yet, for the person who is indifferent, his or her neighbors are of no consequence. And, therefore, their lives are meaningless. Their hidden or even visible anguish is of no interest. Indifference reduces another to abstraction . . . In a way, to be indifferent to that suffering is what makes the human being inhuman. Indifference, after all, is more dangerous than anger or hatred. Anger can at times be creative. One writes a great poem, a great symphony. One does something special for the sake of humanity because one is angry at the injustice that one witnesses. But the indifference is never creative . . . Indifference elicits no response. Indifference is not a response. Indifference is not a beginning; it is an end. And, therefore, indifference is always the friend of the enemy, for it benefits the aggressor - never his victim, whose pain is magnified when he or she feels forgotten. The political prisoner in his cell, the hungry children, the homeless refugees - not to respond to their plight, not to relieve their solitude by offering them a spark of hope is to exile them from human memory. And in denying their humanity, we betray our own. Indifference, then, is not only a sin, it is a punishment. What about the children? Oh, we see them on television, we read about them in the papers, and we do so with a broken heart. Their fate is always the most tragic, inevitably. When adults wage war, children perish. We see their faces, their eyes. Do we hear their pleas? Do we feel their pain, their agony? Every minute one of them dies of disease, violence, famine. Together we walk towards the new millennium, carried by profound fear and extraordinary hope." ***Elie Wiesel, Survivor of Auschwitz***

These words are profoundly true today as yesterday and they will be again on another tomorrow. But what I want to share with my readers at this time is that this is, in part, the reason for the profound faith which sets us apart. Because if we understand it, in a true and meaningful way, then nothing - even the greatest acts of evil - can harm our souls. Yes, they can harm our bodies, they can kill our loved ones, they can do great calamities upon this earth and will continue to do so because we live in this mortal realm wherein the battles between good and evil will continually rage.

But in our hearts, if we know the truth, none of it can change that which we are in the spirit. In the words of Our Lord (New American Bible, New Testament, Matthew 10:28) "Do not fear those who deprive the body of life but cannot destroy the soul. Rather, fear him who can destroy both body and soul."

By saying this, I do not mean in any way to deny our grief. Our grief is powerful and necessary. Grief can be a great harbinger of changes in the soul, and a powerful stimuli for greater understanding. It can also be a sword that is placed in the heart and never given rest. It is the Way of the Cross, the Way of Our Lord. So we embrace it. But what I am saying is that there really is nothing more profound that can be said other than to restate our belief and that which we already know to be true as spiritual seekers of the kingdom.

PART II

CHAPTER ONE

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Standing before an aging storefront, a soul who had been struggling with terminal illness for several years awaited my arrival. Diabetic and in kidney failure, she couldn't survive without undergoing the rigors of dialysis three times a week.

Owning the store in my vision, I would go there every day and wait for the winds to pass. Kicking up about three in the afternoon, they'd remain deadly for several hours until they died down. Staying inside the store, we hoped that the windows would not be blown out. "Why don't we just go live in another town?" I asked her one day, "This is ridiculous, going through natural disasters every single day. There must be some other place we can go where this doesn't happen." Calmly she said, "I cannot go anywhere else."

Knowing that the winds were going to be especially treacherous and dangerous one day, she had a very small little house that lay within a ravine aside the store. Having only one room, it was built with wooden shutters which could block the windows and the door in case of a day like this. Urging me to join her in the house to withstand the winds, I agreed as the clouds did look ominous.

Entering the small room, I almost felt like I was suffocating because it was so small, but I entered anyway because I knew that it was the only way. Bolting the two different doors that overlapped, we closed most of the shutters around the windows, too, but left a couple of them open so that we could watch the impending storm. The winds picked up quickly and dramatically as a woman who'd been walking along the parking lot

knocked on the door, but my friend called out to her that we couldn't open the door because of the pressure. "But go run into the store," she said, "it's open. And run to the far end of the building away from the glass." Doing so, we watched her running and struggling to get there. Momentarily relaxing when she made it, all of a sudden we saw a huge funnel cloud approaching us directly. The house began blowing around in circles and bumping on the ground. Quickly jumping up, I ran to her window and closed the wooden protective barrier. "I don't want you to get glass in your eyes," I said, as the funnel cloud whipped up the building, tossing us on our heads and all about.

Remembering that Andy and my daughters were in a house nearby, I panicked. "What can I do?" I thought. "I can't do anything to protect them from this!" No element remained within my control, and I could do nothing. We bopped around for quite some time before the funnel dropped us onto a very busy city street. Feeling that the winds were dying down, I'd opened the window behind me just a crack. Glass was broken and vehicles were coming towards us very quickly. Would they stop? Or were we about to be smashed to bits? It was out of our control and we couldn't do anything.

Before we could panic too badly, several city buses surrounded the little house to protect us from oncoming traffic. As we slowly exited through the door, many stood aside and clapped as they were grateful we had survived this awful day. Andy stood among them and walked forward, as my relief could not be measured. Taking his hand, we were suddenly walking in the parking lot of the store.

The windows had been completely blown out and debris was blocking many of the fallen windows. In a panic, we ran towards the building hoping to find the

woman we had sent there for safety. Andy blocked my path. "I'm sorry, Andy. I didn't mean to put myself in harms way." "No," he said, "it's okay. You have to feel the pain."

Realizing suddenly the pain of those with terminal and chronic illness, I saw the analogy of their fight, of battling the destructive natural disaster that hits them every day with valor and courage. 'How stressful it would be to have to join this woman in her battle everyday!' I thought. Overwhelming and constant, she had no choice in seeking a more amenable environment. She couldn't escape her own body, except were she to die. In the meantime, she must accept her fate and the fact that it was something she could not leave. "You have to feel the pain and fight the good fight," Andy said, "and in so doing, you will be sanctified and brought ever closer to holiness."

People with chronic and terminal illnesses serve a purpose for the remainder of us who do not yet suffer so. They teach us to be more compassionate, but because of their long-suffering, they also teach us about true courage, perseverance and sacrifice. Shared pain deepens love.

"At Christmas I was talking to our lepers and telling them that the Leprosy is a gift from God, that God can trust them so much that He gives them this terrible suffering . . . and one man who was completely disfigured started pulling at my sari. 'Repeat that,' he said. 'Repeat that this is God's love. Those who are suffering understand you when you talk like this, Mother Teresa.' Christ is really living his passion in these homes. In our people you can see Calvary."

Prayertimes with Mother Teresa, Week Seven, Page 29, (Christianity, Catholic, Words of Mother Teresa)

****

Peering from above in the out-of-body state, I

watched myself interacting with some friends I'd known in my past. As we were all going to go to sleep on this floor, I gently laid a blanket upon myself and immediately fell asleep. Stirrings began immediately and soon went out of control as a nightmarish memory from a past rape emerged. Yelling and screaming in my sleep, I begged the perpetrator to leave me alone, to get away from me. He did not. While looking from above, I couldn't help but be a bit embarrassed because in my sleep I was revealing to my on-looking friends this nightmarish part of my past. But I had no control over the horrid tremblings that overtook my soul upon the ground.

A nearby friend was concerned at these unconscious cries for help from this unknown assailant and went to find a counselor. When they returned, I was still murmuring in my sleep about the rape, and the counselor understood their meaning. Awaking, on some level I had known that I'd revealed my inner secret, but acted as if I didn't know, because I was ashamed.

Only a moment passed before I was swept off into a classroom with a childhood teacher and friends. Receiving an eternal message for one of my classmates, I asked the teacher for permission to give the written message to him in private. Declining, she insisted that I read the message aloud to the class. Becoming enraged, I screamed, "How dare you try to control me and the eternal in this way?" Quickly, I was out of control and enraged in my insistence. Sub-conscious intention obvious, I tried to control *them* instead. Remaining calm, but concerned about my rage, the teacher called in another one to help her. Although I wouldn't have hurt anyone, my rage was intense enough to make her wonder if I could.

Calming myself as the other teacher arrived; he

looked at me with kindness and patience. "Mother Teresa once told me that when you make chocolate chip cookies, you will inevitably burn them sometimes. But we are not to be choosy, we should eat them anyway." Cowering in shame, I felt only compassion from the eternal. Because of these acts that occurred to me in childhood, I had tried desperately not to be controlled by others, even in circumstances where obedience required. By raging at others when they didn't understand something from the eternal, I defiled the very message that I was meant to give. In order to do a good deed, I committed a vile act which far surpassed the goodness of the original intent. In fulfilling the Lord's requests, we must fulfill them with temperance, obedience and prudence in mind, as well as, respect for both the message and for whom it is intended. If it cannot be given in the original manner intended, then pray . . . for the Lord shall surely find another way.

"My Father, I humbly pray and bow before you and ask for your forgiveness for my inexcusable conduct on many occasions. It is unforgivable to defile a holy grace in this manner, but through your divine mercy, I ask for this stain to be purified and redeemed into a higher domain, so that I may humbly fulfill your will in the manner in which you ask. At no time, Lord, have I earned the incredible graces you have bestowed upon my soul. Please forgive me, my Lord."

Standing in my backyard as an Aurora Borealis began to merge with the night sky, the moon began to change image, and the colors of purple and blue began shooting across the sky in the form of lights. Ancient writings and letters appeared aside the moon in the sky as I watched in holy wonder.

"But, if they were not thus clothed with My Will, in true humility, they would often offend against their

own perfection, esteeming themselves the judges of those who do not walk in the same path."

The Dialogue of St. Catherine of Siena, A Treatise of Prayer, Page 211, Middle, (Christianity, Catholic, Author: St. Catherine of Siena)

****

As debris was everywhere, I began obsessively cleaning everything in sight, thinking that this might please my friend when she returned. Because it was her reality I was cleaning up, I thought she would be very excited. When she returned, however, she wasn't as pleased as I'd expected. "You forgot to clean the most important part," she said, as suddenly I saw two large ugly tarantulas inside of my body. Knowing that this was another remnant of my days wandering in darkness, I ordered them out. They began walking, one through each arm, until they left my body through each hand.

Disgusted and grossed out, my friend looked at me with care and consideration as there was no judgment, it just simply had to be done. In our efforts to help others with their defilement, we mustn't forget our own. In the end, we are all individually responsible for what lies within us, and we cannot purify another, just as another cannot purify us.

"If one runs after that which is not his, it flies from him, and what is more, he loses his own as well."

The Zohar (Kaballah), Volume V, Korah (Numbers), Page 238, Paragraph 2, (Judaism)

"And no bearer of a burden can bear the burden of another."

The Holy Qur'an, Part XV, Chapter 17, Section 2, No. 15, (Islam, Words of Mohammad)

****

Wearing a pink cloak, a man approached and looked deeply into my eyes. Pulling down his coverlet, I could see his brown eyes and hair. "The A and the B, the

I and the AM is calling you into service. Listen to Him." I turned.

Suddenly within a church where many people were gathering, I noticed that everybody was bringing injured people into the building on stretchers. Saying nothing, I felt my soul being sucked away as the power of the Lord entered my spirit and took over my spiritual body, as I observed from above. Speaking amazing profundities through my mouth, the Lord spoke as most in the room scoffed. Two or three of them, however, realized that the Lord had come among them. As the words flowed from my mouth, many of the injured were healed and His Presence awoke a few. The Lord called my spirit back to my body five or six times, and entered five or six times, and each time was unexpected and amazingly powerful.

When it was over, I uttered not a sound. Praying to the Lord quietly, I said, "I am unworthy of Your presence within me, Lord. But I thank you for purifying me, and for applying mercy to my sinful soul. I know, Lord, that it is not through myself, but through You alone that it has become possible for my body to become a temple for You." Bowing in prayer, I was suddenly whisked back to form.

"You have 159 days left before you die. Use them wisely," a voice whispered in my ear. For now, I didn't know if this were to be a true physical death, or yet another birth into higher mind. Waiting . . .

"And Moses said unto God, Behold when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, the God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? What shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you."

King James Bible, Old Testament, Exodus 3:13-14,

(Christianity, Judaism)

"There are twenty-two letters by which the I am, Yah, the Lord of hosts, Almighty and Eternal, designed, formed and created by three Sepharim, His whole world . . ."

Sepher Yezirah, Chapter VI, Section 9, (Judaism)

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"'As it hath been said: 'Now Thou drawest me to the summit of glory, again Thou castest me into the lowest abyss.'"

The Seven Valleys and the Four Valleys, The Second Valley, Page 53, Paragraph 1, (Baha'i, Author: Baha'u'llah)

As I had been sitting in sin, and such a state would indeed sting, I broke out in a rash all over my body. Open bloody sores pierced my legs, feet and groin, while the hives lingered on every other part of my body.

As my physical body got sicker and sicker (still undiagnosed), and my blood pressure soared, it began to appear as if I could die. In this moment, when all else seemed out of my hands, my death became real and haunting as the Lord began to open my eyes. It was the week of the 159th day . . . the day of my death.

In that week, the Lord made it possible for me to see the true grossness of vice, in particular, that of vanity, a vice I was taught by the world and indulged in all of my life. Perhaps words cannot express what I now felt, but I saw vanity from God's eyes, and was horrified by its disgusting nature. Vanity is so very ugly. But beyond this, that week had been a true battle between me and darkness, as they were trying very hard to overcome my physical strength and do me in. These are my thoughts as they occurred on day 159:

I'm very sick as I write this, but I feel I must leave these final words, whether I truly die today or not, for

they speak of this horrible truth that every soul must face when they look upon their own death, and when they enter into the abyss of their own sin. The Lord has shown me many things, things that could be of value to every soul to know.

As horrible dark creatures have been purged of my soul these past few months, I have gone through repeated temptations and glimmerings into the workings of temptation. I have seen that I am and always have been very attracted to vanity and destructive sexual energy and it is these energies that have allowed the presence of spindly demons, tarantulas, spiders and bees. I have seen that my attraction to this came from a sexual crime which was perpetrated on me long ago, and I have been given the grace to see the vileness of that act and how the Lord looks upon this sin by the perpetrator.

But I have been given this grace from a vantage point of detachment, wherein I see that my vices are still my own, and despite their origination, it is my duty to God to discover the truth and amend my own life, irregardless of what others may have done.

"In the other life, a person never suffers punishment because of inherited evil, because it does not belong to him. That is, he is not at fault for being what he is in this respect. Rather, he suffers punishment because of the realized evil that does belong to him - that is, the amount of inherited evil that he has made his own by his life activities."

Heaven & Hell, Chapter 37, No. 342, Paragraph 3, Page 258, (Christianity, Swedenborgianism, Author: Emanuel Swedenborg)

Having seen that to judge and hold anger is a grave sin which pulls a creature far away from God, doing so allays the application of mercy to your own soul. Now I truly know what it means, 'Judge not, lest ye be judged.' And the horrid creatures, now that they

are all outside of me, my body feels almost like acid has burned it from the inside out, as if the exit of such vile substance was as traumatic as their existence. And repeatedly, the creatures have come after me in my sleep and in my wakefulness, for I see them as if they were physical. Bees hit my chest with the ferocity of a lightning-bolt, as my blood pressure soars and I feel pains from inside out. I've never felt such pain . . . or disgust.

"And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye?"

King James Bible, New Testament, Luke 6:41, (Christianity, Words of Christ)

Through the Lord's eyes, I have come to know the vileness that we are surrounded in our world, the disgusting nature of the lives we lead. It is so hard to express, and I'm certain, hard to understand from the other side of this view. For before I had seen it . . . I did not see it. Before I had felt it, I didn't feel the absolute nausiousness and pounding head pain that accompanies the mere resolution that has come to my vision of the disgusting nature of my own crimes against God, and the way our world pollutes the beauty of all the Lord has created. All is vanity, all is vanity. There is nothing more profound than viewing your own sins from the purity of God's eyes and seeing who you really are, rather than what you believe yourself to be. I've come to know that all humans have a very untrue perception of themselves, shadowed by many layers of self-delusion, which if revealed, would shock every one of them into a state of repentance.

My entire delusion about the purpose of life has also been shattered. I've entered a limbo about the reason for existence, as all that I now see within our world with very little exception, is so meaningless in

God's eyes. How much time we waste on useless things, my feelings of disgust for the things of this world are deep at this moment. The vain renderings of flattery, pursuing unworthy goals which attend to self-glorification or self-gratification, lustful attempts to attract the opposite sex; where is the pursuit for the attainment of God, eternal love and mercy? The purification of our souls must surely be the only reason for our existence in these mortal realms; the purification of vice and the perfection of virtue. My children are so important to me now, because I don't know if I will live to raise them. Oh, how important the Lord considers our sacred obligation to the little ones.

"How much more reprehensible are those whose thoughts and deeds are concentrated upon their bodily desires and the time's vanities, whose souls do not ponder the fear of God nor draw it intimately into the fabric of their heart and of their innermost being, nor into their regularly appointed contemplations . . ."

The Gates of Repentance, Second Gate, IX, First Paragraph, (Judaism, Author: Rabbeinu Yonah of Gerona)

Grace and the strength of Christ have kept me alive through this, for this experience has been paralyzing and hard to accept. But I do not feel that I will remain sick forever, I feel that this sickness is being taken from me, and thus, I will someday feel anew. Then I will again be able to feel the love, joy, harmony and mercy of all that which is true. In the meantime, I must accept what is true within me, although it is the most difficult thing to do. For how can anyone see such filth within themselves, know it to be true, see how vile it is, feel the disgust with which God sees it, and then go on? It is a *true* death, one of which I do not yet know how to transcend. For there is a true dying occurring within both my body and soul.

Perhaps the monk who told me in regards to

exorcizing dark things from within, 'these things take time,' misspoke the enormity of the task, for indeed an eternity would not be enough.

I am consoled only by the reminder from the Lord that He knows that we cannot ever attain eternal love if we don't first attempt imperfect love. Some people feel it would be best to deny love than ever take the risk of offending God with imperfect love. I believe this offends God more. In this hour of misery, I cannot get out of my head the saving word that delivered me from hell, 'Mercy.'

If every one of us were to see ourselves as God sees us, we would be implicitly merciful to all, no matter what their sin. For to judge another, is to be blind to the truth of yourself. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. In my hour of wretchedness and death, surrounded by the realization and knowledge of all that is vile within me, all I can ask for is mercy, and hope that God grants more mercy to me than I have shown my fellow man. For vice and corruption are truly not seen in those who are filled with it. I did not see it, until now. And now that I see it, I am so overwhelmed; I cannot even give the words to express what I feel. Pain fills my body and mind, and the assaults of the demons who wish to hold these crimes against God within me forever, if only they knew what I know. Mercy.

"And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses."

King James Bible, New Testament, Mark 11:25-26, (Christianity, Words of Christ)

For now, I must die. All that is within me, is worthy of death. It must be plucked out like a cancer destroying my very soul. And in the ashes, I will rise

again.

Mercy, mercy, mercy.

Last night, as the horrid bee stung my heart I called to Christ for His grace and strength. My strength was gone, and I was surrounded by an all-out affront from the demonic, surrounded in only vile things. All alone, I asked Christ to sustain me through the battle, and He did. The Lord's Presence came strongly, with the knowledge that this battle was one I must fight, that I was indeed very vulnerable and close to death, and that it was not known who would win this battle. If I were to die, it would mean I had failed, so therefore, I fight, for the beast will not tear down this temple of the Lord, just as it has finally achieved its greatest victory, the knowledge of itself! For now, this temple can rise again and be true!

"And he said unto me, 'My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.' Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

King James Bible, New Testament, Galatians 1 12:9, (Christianity, Words of Christ)

Still, I fight. If I were to pass from this world today, I ask only one thing of those I leave behind. Please forgive me, if you can. I truly forgive all now, because I know what forgiveness really means. Sin isn't personal, it's ignorant. To think how vain, how arrogant it was that I could even have thought that you might need forgiveness from a soul as wretched as my own. I have been humbled by the Almighty One.

"And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted."

King James Bible, New Testament, Matthew 23:12, (Christianity, Words of Christ)

Satan wants people to despair and believe they are out of reach of the love of God. Having looked upon

the bees and tarantulas, I realized that the bees were more assaultive and quick, while the tarantulas were more subtle and sneaky. Bees hit you right in the heart and other vital organs with lightning bolts of destructive energy, while the tarantulas prefer to enter while you are asleep, unaware, working a slower, more precise destruction from within.

As I'd looked upon them, I suddenly felt compassion. "Isn't it a horrible existence to be like you?" I asked, as they had cowered slowly. "To live solely for the purpose of the destruction of souls; the dismantling of all hope and love within humanity. That is so sad." Becoming more shadowed, I continued, "You know, I'm absolutely certain that even *you* could be redeemed, even a demon, if you turned to God. Jesus would have mercy on even your souls, if you would let Him deliver you from this abyss." With this, I felt their sadness, but also knew that they were unwilling to make this turn, despite their tremendous despair.

From that moment on, I felt no more fear of them. Going to the abyss taught me compassion for those who must live within it always, because they are too frightened or remote from the ways of God's love.

"A holy man was coming that way one day, and the cowboys warned him of the serpent. 'My children,' said, the holy man, 'I am not afraid. I know Mantras to protect me from harm of all kinds.' And he continued his way and the snake attacked him with upraised hood. On the incantation of some charm by him the snake fell helpless at his feet. 'Why do you,' said the holy man, 'go about doing evil to others? Let me give you a holy name (of God) to repeat always, and you shall learn to love God, and your desire to do evil to others will leave you.' So saying he gave him the holy name and went away."

Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, The Worldly Minded, No.

285, (Hinduism, Words of Sri Ramakrishna)

It is in that moment of realization, when our despair and pain mount to a level indescribable at our offenses to the Lord, that God loves us the most. When a soul no longer believes it is worthy of God's love, it actually becomes the most worthy, for it has attained humility, a virtue beautiful in the eyes of God. The gravest sin, I have been shown through the Lord, is not to forgive. Forgive them, even if they are unable to acknowledge the harm they do, forgive them.

"And Jesus answering said unto them, 'They that are whole need not a physician: but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.'"

King James Bible, New Testament, Luke 5:31-32, (Christianity, Words of Christ)

Allow me to clarify what forgiveness is. It is a choice to bear no ill will or desire for revenge towards a person who may have caused you harm, whether intentionally or inadvertently. When forgiveness is given to a remorseful and repentant offender, it is a way of saying that you accept their imperfection as a human being. When forgiveness is given to an unremorseful and unrepentant offender, it is a way of saying that you accept their inherent ignorance, and their inability to recognize their impact.

But in such a case, you must also draw a strong and bold line. For souls who do not recognize their impact upon others can become the most dangerous of people, and forgiveness does not mean allowing dangerous people to remain in your life, or affording them the freedom to continue causing harm in society. If mercy were absolute, there would be no hell. There is a hell, just as there are prisons, because there are souls who refuse to take responsibility for their acts. Forgive them, but don't allow darkness to reign by removing

consequences.

Lord, I love thee with all my heart and soul and mind. Please Lord be more merciful upon me than I deserve and purify my soul of the stains of sin in which I sit. Born of mercy, by mercy, for mercy, for the greater glory of God. Forgive me, if you can. Mercy, mercy, mercy. Forevermore, mercy. Forgive me. Forgive me. Forgive me.

"You suffer, for Satan and his diseases torment your bodies. But fear not, for their power over you will quickly end . . . by your fasting and your prayer, you have called back the lord of your body and his angels. And now Satan torments you so grievously, for he feels that the end is come. But let not your hearts tremble, for soon will the angels of God appear, to occupy again their abodes and rededicate them as temples of God."

The Essene Gospel of Peace, Book Four, Page 30-31, Bottom & Top, (Christianity, Gnostic/Essene, Words of Christ)

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Standing at the foot of a huge mountain, I noticed that it was covered in snow. Knowing the journey would be difficult; I realized it had to be undertaken. About twenty friends were with me at this point, but as I began to climb, they remained in the foothills. Within moments, I stood at the top of this highest peak alone. Andy was there, but in the background, for this journey had been a solitary one.

Appearing from inside a cave, a man took me hostage. Intending to kill me, this demon wanted me dead simply because I had reached the pinnacle of God's holy understanding. If the demon allowed me to descend this mountain, he knew I would tell of this holy knowledge of virtue and vice to those below. Knowing that I would speak of how we mustn't allow ourselves to walk in the acceptance of vice, but rather, travel the painful, heart-wrenching path of awakening and

remembrance; demonic forces would prefer that we tell everyone that whatever they do is okay, but this is not God's will.

The demon at the top of the mountain tried to kill me, but failed, and I descended the mountain to tell the others of what I had found. When I got there, everyone had left me behind, for they were afraid of this descent into the deeper reaches of my soul. Fearful of this dark night of the soul, they walked away, afraid that being near me would bring the truth of these matters into their awareness. Unwilling to acknowledge that darkness remained within them, as well; they had convinced themselves that this abysmal path was my own and had nothing to do with them.

He shows us our sin and our corruption, but still, we must cleanse it. It will not just be taken from you, you must be willing to give all you have to satisfy the purification of your own corruption; herein lies deliverance, by the power of God, but through your own hand. Herein lies the purpose of the dark night of the soul.

"This divine purge stirs up all the foul and vicious humors of which the soul was never before aware; never did it realize there was so much evil in itself, since these humors were so deeply rooted. And now that they may be expelled and annihilated they are brought to light and seen clearly through the illumination of this dark light of divine contemplation. Although the soul is no worse than before, neither in itself nor in its relationship with God, it feels undoubtedly so bad as to be not only unworthy that God should see it but deserving of His abhorrence."

The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross, The Dark Night, Chapter 10, No. 2, (Christianity, Catholic, Author: St. John of the Cross)

"When thy passions rebel, do thou rebel against them.

When they fight, do thou fight them. When they attack thee, do thou attack them. Only beware lest they conquer thee."

The Voice of the Saints, In Temptation, Page 65, No. 4, (Christianity, Catholic, Words of St. Augustine)

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CHAPTER TWO
The Will of God, Crashing Under the Weight of Suffering, Demonic Attacks and Suffering, Earning the Cross, Tyranny, Sickness as Purgation, Temptations Under Suffering, Understanding Suffering as Christ Understands it.

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Coming to me in the night with a message to impart, he said, "You have Lupus, and everything is going to be okay because it is God's will." Having contracted it during a huge chemical spill years ago, he bade me to accept it and do my best to live within its confines. Thanking him, he disappeared.

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Behind me, the old casket they bore was heavy and old. The funeral procession was long and arduous, following many miles of hills and valleys. Ahead of me, a young minister was walking, and I knew immediately the state of his soul. Although he had a sincere heart, he'd also had weaknesses towards lust which had kept him from perfection. Those who carried the casket were energetic and strong, but I was falling weak. Journeying this procession had left me sick and tired, and I turned to give them a warning look. My eyes told them I didn't know how much longer I could go on.

The abyss had weakened me, and I could no longer carry the casket which contained the deadness which had been purged. Suddenly, I collapsed to the ground, unable to go any further. After all the battles I'd undergone with the demonic, I was now failing from sheer exhaustion, which I'm sure made the demons joyous.

But before anyone could respond, a huge light

began shining in front of me. Looking up, it came towards me at a speed indescribable and entered into my soul. As it did, my spirit was lifted up off the ground and began floating forward in the direction of the procession. Smiling with glee, I knew that my body did not move of its own accord, and that in my weakest moment, when there was only a little further to go, the Lord God was carrying me the rest of the way, so that I could bury my past properly.

The minister fell to his knees in worship of the obvious presence of the Lord. Others fell, too, somehow conveying to me that this act of God had shown them how deeply God must love me, which had changed their view of me as a soul. As they were mortal, they had judged me according to appearances, and my honesty about my status as a sinner. The lengths in which I would go to confess made them look down upon me.

As I was carried, the Lord made to know that the minister had tried to hide his lust and imperfection, and that despite my own sins of a similar nature; it was my humility and clear confession of those deeds which made me more loveable to Him. Because of this, He wouldn't allow my own weakness to hinder completion of this phase.

As God carried my soul, I shed tears of gratitude and joy, for he wouldn't allow me to fall, he wouldn't allow me to fall . . .

"They went into another garden and saw there people digging graves and dying immediately, and coming to life again with holy, luminous bodies.'What does this mean?' they asked. He replied: 'They do this every day. As soon as they lie in the dust the evil taint which they received at first is consumed and they rise at once with new and luminous bodies, those in which they stood at Mount Sinai. As you see them, so they stood at Mount Sinai, with bodies free from all taint; but when they

drew upon themselves the evil imagination, they were changed into other bodies."

The Zohar (Kaballah), Volume V, Shelah Lecha (Numbers), Page 234, Top, (Judaism)

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And so it came to pass that Satan and his forces made continual assaults on my body. At night, they would grab my legs and refuse to let go, until I ordered them to leave in Jesus' name. One night in particular, Satan came with hundreds of his demons trying to have me killed, but I remembered how powerful God is, and simply ordered them to leave again, in Jesus' name. Amidst these assaults, I found that whenever any demon or dark force is near, attacking you, or even just trying to tempt you, you may order them to leave in the name of Jesus Christ, and they *must* obey. Several times, the really sick ones would come and tell me to do evil things, which angered me even more, but it helped me to understand how Satan works within those whose hearts are ignorant or already darkened enough to respond to these sub-conscious promptings. They feed on your anger towards others, your feelings of hopelessness, and your vice.

Energizing your weaknesses, they tempt you to commit acts of evil, from slander to murder, by making you feel that vengeance is your own, rather than God's. But again, I simply ordered them to leave in Jesus' name. Many times, they would come in disguises, but as soon as they were ordered to leave in Jesus' name, they would metamorphosize back into their demonic form, look annoyed and disappear by the power of God.

On one occasion, someone had come to me from my past, offering an insincere apology, but I didn't recognize its insincerity and I accepted it. As soon as I did, a stick bug demon attempted to enter my neck.

Pulling it off, I glanced at this person whose motives were clear. The serpent comes in many faces.

On other occasions, demons would take the form of my husband, Andy, and it would only be through my energetic awareness that I could identify what was happening. One time, a demon disguised as Andy came on to me sexually, but I immediately knew it was not him. Seeing a cross manifest in the sky, I knew I was under temptation and ordered him to leave. Revealing himself as a slimy green with pointy ears and horns, he left.

Interestingly, when we seem to have overcome temptations on a conscious level, there still lies beneath the surface of our souls subtler levels of vice which must be purified. We must purify our souls on all levels, mind, body and soul, the physical, our thoughts, and our dreams, in that order . . . and to do this is a great task, for our tendencies, karmic and otherwise, run deep.

"Many think that merely refraining from adulteries in the body is chastity, when yet that is not chastity unless there is abstention in the spirit also."

Marital Love, Chapter VI, Page 213, No. 153, (Christianity, Swedenborgianism, Author: Emanuel Swedenborg)

"The tempter, ever on the watch, wages war most violently against those whom he sees most careful to avoid sin."

The Voice of the Saints, In Temptation, Page 64, No. 2, (Christianity, Catholic, Words of St. Leo the Great)

"The devil is only permitted to tempt thee as much as is profitable for thy exercise and trial, and in order that thou, who didst not know thyself, mayest find out what thou art."

The Voice of the Saints, In Temptation, Page 64, No. 3, (Christianity, Catholic, Words of St. Augustine)

"The spiritual combat in which we kill our passions to put on the new man is the most difficult struggle of all.

We must never weary of this combat, but fight the holy fight fervently and perseveringly."

The Voice of the Saints, In Temptation, Page 64, No. 4, (Christianity, Catholic, Words of St. Nilus)

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Swept within a church wherein an angel of the Lord gave me a huge painting of the passion, she said, "You have earned the cross." Continuing, she conveyed, 'If you look towards darkness, then darkness shall look towards you. If you look towards the light, then the light shall look upon you. If you carry within you understanding, than no matter where you must look, whether it be the highest heaven or the lowest hell, you will see God. In this, you will always know what service to render to evolution.' Vowing to guard the direction of my eyes, she disappeared.

"During the past, this mind of mine roamed freely as it liked, as it desired, at its own pleasure. But today, I shall fully keep it in check, even as the elephant driver with the point of a goad controls an unruly elephant in rut."

Dhammapada, Canto XXIII, No. 326, Page 129, (Buddhism)

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"And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children unto the third and to the fourth generation."

King James Bible, Old Testament, Exodus 34:6-7, (Christianity)

"Lead me from darkness to light. Lead me from hatred to love. Lead me from limitations to Thine inexhaustible power; lead me from ignorance to

wisdom. Lead me from suffering and death to everlasting life and enjoyment in Thee. Above all, lead me from the delusion of human attachment into realization of Thy love eternal, which plays hide and seek with me in all forms of human love."

Man's Eternal Quest, Looking at Creation with Seeing Eyes, Page 260, Paragraph 2, (Hinduism, Kriya Yoga, Words of Paramahansa Yogananda)

My soul had again entered deep illness, and in my sleep I was taken into an energetic powerhouse. Vibrating at speeds I'd never before fathomed, I was stunned by this overwhelming frequency with which I'd made contact. "You're illness is an initiation into the Kabbalah," a voice said, as many energetic currents overtook my soul and my sick and wretched form surrendered to the flow of divine influx. The clouds above me became immersed in lights, and my soul became content in wonder. Unaware of it at this moment, my journey into the Kabbalah was about to take me into the mystery of original sin.

"The more illuminating the exposition given of the Torah, the more those clouds are lit up, and they become more and more transparent until the veil becomes visible, and from the midst of that veil they see a light brighter than that of all other lights, and this is the face of Moses. No one actually sees his face, but only the light which proceeds from the veil behind all the clouds . . . When they emerge from the Academy of Moses they fly to the Academy of the firmament, and those who are qualified fly to the highest Academy. Of that generation it is written: 'Happy is the people that is in such a case, yea, happy is the people whose God is the Lord."

The Zohar (Kaballah), Volume V, Shelah Lecha (Numbers), Page 235-236, Bottom & Top, (Judaism)

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Faced with absolute tyranny, I looked upon a concentration camp from World War II. The desolation confounded me, and I felt immense sorrow when I looked upon four black hats often worn by Hasidic Jews, lined up aside a grave site which was burrowed next to an oven. Such scenes only remind us of the true mystery behind the redemption of mankind, and the mysterious ways through which the will of God are fulfilled despite the tyranny and evil of humanity. No words, no words . . .

"And thy Lord will surely pay back to all their deeds in full. He indeed is Aware of what they do."

Holy Qur'an, Part XII, Chapter 11, Section 10, No. 111, (Islam, Words of Mohammed)

"'How abundant is Your goodness that You have concealed for Your reverent ones,' and it is written: 'He guards all his bones, even one of them was not broken.' May it rest secure, alone, and serene, from fear of evil . . . May his/her soul be bound in the Bond of Life. And may it be brought back to life with the Resuscitation of the Dead with all the dead of Your people Israel, with mercy. Amen."

The Siddur, Death and Bereavement, From the Prayer for the Deceased, (Judaism)

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For several years now, my soul had heralded momentary glimpses into the world of pain and suffering due to the still undiagnosed illnesses (Lupus) which had clung to my soul. Wondering why such an affliction might be necessary, I began to pray and ask for wisdom as to the purpose of my own particular suffering, and also to know in some general sense, the purpose of the many sufferings which are placed upon the people of God during their Earthly sojourns.

Immediately, I began to hear the voice of an

unidentified saint as if speaking over a radio. Speaking of the importance of overcoming vanity, I instantly realized that my current illness was connected with her words. Making it difficult to be vain as my body was continually covered in rashes, sores or other disgusting maladies, it was forcing my spirit to let go of this sin.

A method of purging myself of all vanity - a sin which was great within me - this was to be accomplished in two ways. First, by the nature of the physical disgustingness of the maladies themselves which precluded vanity, and second, by being in a situation for which I could not control, the discharge of the vanity of self-control and self-destination.

"Illness and tribulations, being teachers of piety, are not to be avoided."

A Buddhist Bible, The Supreme Path, No. V. No. 5, (Buddhism, Tibetan)

"When God gives you something to suffer, says St. Augustine, He acts as a physician, and the suffering He sends it not a punishment but a remedy."

The 12 Steps to Holiness and Salvation, Chapter 12, Page 188, Top, (Christianity, Catholic)

Padre Pio was standing behind the counter, as I had emerged in a new place. Immediately watching him from afar, I reveled in this holy man who had received the stigmata, bearing the wounds of Christ.

Approaching him, I said, "I have something to tell you, Padre." Looking up, he waited for my words. "I love you," I said. Smiling for a moment, he then spoke. "Good," he said, "that's good . . . for now."

"Wherefore, every blessed soul will lose all her own desires and will have no other desire but to love God and to be loved by Him, and knowing that she is sure of ever loving Him and of being ever loved by Him, this very thing will be her blessedness . . ."

The Soul Sanctified, Chapter 30, Page 84, Paragraph 2,

(Christianity, Catholic)

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About six months pregnant with my third child, who would be Jacob, I'd been ordered to bed rest. A serious undiagnosed condition remained beneath the surface, however, one which would not be discovered for another two years. But when it would be discovered, it would affect my life in a huge way.

Falling off into a deep, ecstatic, transcendental state, my soul was hovering amongst the stars. Honoring my soul in this brilliant and peaceful place with the presence of my two daughters, Melissa and Mary, we hovered together for hours absorbing the celestial impetus given us by the Lord. Being able to watch my two jewels made this heavenly experience all the more joyful, and I thanked the Lord for his kindness.

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Taking my soul on a hellish journey, the disgusting ogre had arrived with permission from the Lord to make an effort to tempt me to despair. Because I'd been so sick throughout my pregnancy, I'd already been struggling with depression, and Satan felt that he knew just what might take me over the edge.

Reaching his hand to me, I refused to take it, looking at him as though he were delirious. "I will go with you, because it has been ordered by the Lord. But I shall at no point touch you," I said. Acting insulted, the devil began falling as if he were traveling through an endless pit. Without any conscious participation on my part, I fell in line with him as we entered into the deepest caverns of the Earth.

Arriving at two pits of fire, the horrific stench was only outdone by the moans heard in the darkness. Deeply touched, I remained unmoved in my countenance refusing to look upon the face of the ogre;

but inwardly, I mourned and lamented the existence of this hell realm, and beyond this, the terrifying reality that some souls actually condemned themselves to such a place.

Everything was as dark as the deepest of caverns, the soil and pith sloppy and gooey, like mud beneath your feet. Filled with the energy of evil, these were the pits of fire.

Looking to Satan, he was waiting expectantly for a reply, or even better, a horrified reaction to his kingdom. Looking at him emotionless, I said, "The Lord does not wish us to despair, but rather, to focus on heavenly things . . . hope." Looking deeply disappointed, he didn't move, but his face showed no more sarcasm. Continuing, I quietly replied, "And that is exactly what I intend to do." Immediately, I disappeared.

Aboard a huge circular craft, several hundred sub-conscious astral souls were soaring through the heavens to bear witness to some of the wonders of God. Immediately, I noticed that we were all wearing inflatable socks upon our feet and lower legs to battle the cold of outer space. Holding a book in their hands, a group of human looking spiritual beings showed it to us, communicating that this was to be given to the extra-terrestrials at the space station, which was apparently our destination. Sacred and holy, I couldn't help but open my naive mouth, querying their disapproving faces. "Why haven't you also brought them ancient sacred texts?" Immediately I understood that they had brought some of the ancient sacred texts to them. Looking at me as if it should be obvious, they said, "As pertains to the galactic heavens, some of the ancient sacred texts upon the Earth are out of date. Although some things, such as the Bible and other holy scriptures, remain timeless and relevant wherever they may be,

there are others which are obsolete in our realms, although highly relevant to those of you remaining on the Earth." Embarrassed, I could *feel* the highly evolved nature of these galactic beings who far surpassed any intelligence I'd ever seen.

Unfortunately, they didn't expand on this because the time had come to look upon our destination. Following their instructions, I looked out of the window in our craft. To our right, was a magnificent space station, much larger than the one I'd seen recently. But what absolutely confounded me in a state of wonder and bliss was my witness to a most profound debacle of heavenly beauty filled with knowledge of great galactic significance. Surrounding the space station were huge magnificent paintings with gold frames, encircling the city with their holy protection and filling us travelers with the wisdom that they had been placed upon the sky to impart. As these paintings hovered in the heavens, they seemed to be attached only to the heavenly landscape. Stars cascaded around them as if they were somehow alive, and indeed, in an inexplicable way they were.

Enraptured by the brilliant artistic renderings of Jesus Christ, Mother Mary, the Twelve Disciples, St. John the Baptist and a panoramic display of the Life of Christ, they had been placed in chronological order and completely surrounded the space station. Profound but simple was their message, Jesus Christ was just as significant to the galactic heavens as He had been to the planet Earth and His life on Earth was a great galactic and Universal moment! Seeding us to one day become a part of this much larger, universal, grand and galactic union, this amazing redemptive journey had been etched upon the stars with a patient knowing. Someday, the tribes of the Earth would awaken, and grasp the

knowledge of the spheres . . . that of Galactica!
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As I was reading the following passage from a vision beheld by the most saintly Padre Pio, a most amazing consolation was given me by the Lord:

"My soul was suddenly carried away by a force stronger than itself into a very large room illuminated by a very bright light. On a high throne studded with jewels was seated a lady of rare beauty. This was the most holy Virgin who held in her arms the Child of majestic mien, his face more resplendent and luminous than the sun. All around them was a great multitude of very beautiful Angels. At the end of this large room there were two small beds, in each of which was a person who, to judge by appearances, must have been in great suffering. One of them was suffering so much as to seem on the point of bidding farewell to this life. Before the throne on which the Virgin was seated there was another person, completely absorbed in contemplation, who was the personification of happiness. The Child came down from the Virgin's arms, and followed by his Mother and the Angels approached the person wrapt in prayer. He threw his arms around that person, clasped her to his breast, kissed her an infinite number of times and bestowed on her innumerable other caresses. The Virgin and the Angels did likewise. Then he went towards the beds of the two sick persons. To one of these, who was sitting up in bed, the Child addressed just a few words of comfort, rather coldly and unceremoniously. At the other sick person who lay at full length in the bed and had greater need of comfort, he did not deign even to glance, and as if he hated even to punish her, he ordered the Angels to beat her. These did not hesitate to carry out his orders. They approached the sick person, one of them took her by the hand and the others began to

punch and kick and slap her. This scene seemed very cruel. But what a strange and wonderful thing! The poor creature did not complain, but in a very weak voice exclaimed: 'O most gracious Jesus, have mercy on me while the time for mercy still lasts. Do not condemn me, most sweet Jesus, when you come to judge me, for I should not be able to love you anymore. O most compassionate Jesus, if your severe justice intends to condemn me, I appeal to your most loving mercy.' The Child turned to me and said, 'Learn how one should love.' I understood nothing. This sight made me tremble like a reed exposed to a violent wind, for I expected this soul to be rejected by Jesus. But alas, how different from the reality is the sensual man's estimation of spiritual things! Wretched me! For many years I have attended the school of suffering without learning anything. May the infinite mercy of our God be eternally blessed for his great goodness and patience in bearing with me! But to banish all fear from my heart the Lord willed to show me also the souls of these three persons. How beautiful are the souls in whom the heavenly Spouse reigns! If all were to be shown this beauty, we should certainly not see so many of our foolish brethren hastening to where God is not to be found. All three of these angelic creatures were in God's grace; all were adorned with merits, though not in equal measure, for the third was more fully adorned by merit than the second and the second more than the first. Since I could not understand why the Lord treated in such different ways these dear spouses of his, he was pleased to come to the aid of this wretched creature and by a clear and explicit interior locution he began to say to me: 'The first was a soul still weak and in need of caresses, otherwise she would have turned her back on him; the second soul was less weak and to keep her in his service she still needed some little sign

or affection; the third was a beloved spouse of his, because, in spite of the way he afflicted her, she remained constant in her service and faithful in love.'

Padre Pio of Pietrelcina - Letters, Volume 1, Letter 139, Page 436, (Christianity, Catholic, Words of Padre Pio)

As I read this vision of Padre Pio, I allowed myself to consider that maybe this sort of thing was happening to me. After all, I started out my spiritual life receiving many consolations in the form of visions and holy dreams, but now was very often left to battle the wretch on my own, not to mention that I'd been suffering great illness. But I didn't want to be presumptuous, so I began to let that thought go, when suddenly . . . a light from heaven came down and surrounded my whole body.

Immediately wrapped in a state of ecstatic bliss, all around me began to glow with light, even down to the last particles. Molecular light was filling the air around me as a spectacular shower of white glowing dust fell from the heavens to the floor of my bedroom. Literally *feeling* the Holy Spirit come into me like a torrential flood of energy, I immediately became aware of the presence of the Lord Jesus at my side. 'I wish for you to read this as a consolation to your own soul,' He said. Reassurance that my sufferings were not an indication of God's wrath, but rather, an indication of God's confidence in my loyalty to Him, despite the active purgation being experienced in my body, was undeniable.

Knowing without *any doubt* that the Lord was happy with me, He still loved me, despite the just consequences of my former sins. In that moment, I realized that it was through *these very consequences* that my soul was becoming sanctified. Perhaps this is one of the ways God heals us, as suffering with grace brings its own reward. Knowing the sincerity of my contrition, the

Lord conveyed that my sins had been blotted out, but purgation was under way.

Surrounded by this heavenly light for about ten minutes, I cannot even describe the eternal ecstasy which I experienced within that time. In this totally conscious, physical waking state, the presence of Jesus was so comforting and clear, and the light had manifested to my physical vision. The Lord had not left me to muddle in the quagmire of past sins, but rather, was preparing me to receive of heaven! Having grown up in the Lord, it was time for me to *stand tall* for the Lord, irregardless of heavenly consolations I did or did not receive.

Receiving a similar ecstatic consolation two weeks later while watching the holy mass on television, the priest had spoken about those who were unable to attend mass (due to personal illness, taking care of babies, or attending to the sick). Saying that Jesus was with us in our suffering, I immediately felt peace and saw as heavenly hosts appeared visibly in multitudes around the room. The Lord conveyed that He not only *approved* of my absence from the holy altar, but *preferred* it, because it was a sacrifice. Given for the benefit of my children or on behalf of souls when I was sick, the heavenly lights descended from heaven, and I was *completely filled* with the presence of the Lord. "I prefer sacrifice and surrender," Jesus said, "to the strict adherence of rule."

As the lights began to lift in the room, St. Patrick appeared (Patron saint of Ireland), hovering in the air above the floor. Nodding quietly in approval of my sacrifice, he disappeared as the entire heavenly host vanished.

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CHAPTER THREE
The Reward, the Powerful Spirit Underlying those who Suffer Much, Heavenly Healing Help, Warnings from Heaven about Physical Sickness, Insensitivity Posed by Others when we Become Sick, Meeting Gabriel.

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After several months of chronic pain and various infections, I found myself in a ballpark wearing the robe of a monk. Head pounding with a migraine, my neck was sore, and I was coming down with another high fever. Andy was sitting on the bleachers a few feet in front of me, while I was standing in the wings trying not to make my discomfort obvious. One of the ballplayers left the field, coming directly towards me. "You poor thing," he said, "always trying to smile, even though the pain never goes away." Emanating great compassion, my soul was immediately transported to a very glorious place.

Amongst the celestial heavens, stars cascaded around the metaphysical convent as a very old woman came towards me wearing a nun's habit. Blue-green skies shimmering, her long gray hair and deep blue eyes held compassion in this magnificent cathedral which claimed the stars as its walls and the cosmos as its altar.

Coming towards me, she reached out her hand to mine as I eagerly grasped it. Tears filled my eyes. "Why are you crying?" she asked very sweetly. Not knowing quite what to say, my embarrassment eluded the fact that I was just ecstatically happy to remember her. "I'm home," I said quietly, accepting the momentary reunion as a gift in reward for perseverance.

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Given entry into this man's life only days before

he was to die, I was astounded to witness the level of suffering from which he was about to be freed. Debilitating and fatal, his condition was shown to me in a graphic display as I looked upon his soul. In the symbolic image given me, I noticed that his spinal column traveled upwards from his tailbone to his neck . . . and then it continued down his left arm all the way to his hand. Unable to ascertain his exact disease, I knew it to be related to a spinal deformity.

For only a moment, the Lord allowed me to experience the pain this poor man was undergoing as his final death watch had begun. Unable to describe such pain in words, I can only say that it was deafening.

Having been taken care of by his mother all of his life, he was a grown man in his early twenties. Able to see her, although she was completely unaware of my presence, my purpose this eve was to die *with* this young man and bring him over the divide, assuring that his journey was completed properly.

As soon as his mother left for work that morning, his soul and body became transfixed in an unusual way, as if he were seeing into two worlds. It was at this time that he first became aware of my presence. Immediately as our eyes met, there was a confounding joyous love that we shared, as if we had perhaps known each other from before.

Allowing me a singular gift, the Lord permitted me to see beyond his very visible physical deformity, and peer within to witness his absolutely spectacular soul. Breathtakingly beautiful, I was able to see his overlapping spirit as it began its preparations to leave. Although his deformity was really quite difficult to look at physically, his soul was magnificently beautiful.

Knowing this beauty had come about through the experience of such a difficult life, he'd been trapped

in a body which was both unappealing and non-functional. Quite a trial for this soul, his spirit radiated empowered masculinity and strength. Although some people think that such afflictions are brought about by the way people think, lack of faith or karmic retribution, it was evidently clear that this was not at all true in this person's case. Clearly enunciated by the Lord, the purpose of this incarnation was for this very masculine, virile and powerful soul . . . to experience abject powerlessness and being despised by his fellow man. Karmic aspects were not relevant. Wow, what an amazing thing this was to see.

When a soul requires a certain experience to affect spiritual elements within their character, they have the experience irregardless of karma or other such matters. Learning absolute humility from this experience, this humility was all the more striking because I was witnessing it, side by side, with the true power and magnitude of his soul. Magnified by the attainment of the necessary virtue of humility, this power was actually strengthened from the experience of total helplessness, abjection and having to be cared for by others in every way.

No words can express the intense love I felt for this soul, as we spent these few days in timelessness (one night astral time) laughing and discussing his current life and my own. Our time together was made more special because there were many people, gratefully not including his mother, who were anxious for him to leave. Many considered him a burden and wished for him to hurry up and die. This was so sad, I cannot even express it. So many people think that when a person is obviously deformed, handicapped, chronically or terminally ill, or mentally challenged, that they are not aware of how others feel about having to care for them. But in this case,

he was definitively aware and deeply troubled by the burden his existence placed on others.

When souls are near death, while their spirit is going back and forth from the physical body to their soul, they are often quite lucid and aware during the times in which they enter into the awareness of their spirit. Our time of death is a very important time, and most of us would like to have the opportunity for proper good-byes, Lord willing. Most of us would like to leave this world in peace, knowing our loved ones are at peace with us. It's painful to leave knowing resentment remains because of the manner in which you left this world.

After spending several days in timelessness together with this wondrous being, the Lord, through a great and merciful act, allowed me to experience his death alongside him as if I were also leaving the world. Feeling every pain right alongside him, I felt every system shut down. Amazed at the incredible amount of pain this man had lived with, I was grateful to have this window into the severity of the suffering of others. Experiencing this generated a great deal of compassion within me towards the sick. Although I'd had my own share of suffering in this life due to my disease, this was a totally different kind of suffering. Deformity is a cross in itself, but his condition caused constant extreme pain in the head, spine, back, and arms. Although my own suffering could be severe, it was usually transient, appearing in cycles, giving me breaks between severe bouts of pain. Giving a chance for regeneration between them, this is distinctly different from being worn down continually by severe pain that never leaves.

Feeling the body systems shutting down as the process of death continued, I again noticed that the most difficult adjustment for me was the cessation of breath,

although I felt all of the systems shut down. It was as if there were a psychic bond between the soul and the various parts of the body, because you could definitely ascertain such things as the liver, the intestines, the pancreas, kidneys, etc., all shutting down. During this experience, they seemed to occur one by one, beginning with the cessation of breath, and then the heartbeat, followed by the remaining bodily organs and systems.

Entering eternity, I was surprised that this man had crossed over with his disability intact. Before I had a moment to contemplate this any further, we immediately began flying.

Mountainous and serene, we stood amidst a large desert valley in the center of a cathedral of peaks. A large, rectangular, crystal, transparent enclosure was graciously encased before us in the sand. Approximately twenty feet long and ten feet wide, the energy from this enclosure immediately pulled his soul inside, as he now appeared to be lying down within the confines of the crystal. Restoration the purpose, I watched as a beautiful light lit the heavens, surrounding him and myself as he fell into a deep sleep within the enclosure.

Although I had a great desire to wait here so that I might be present upon his waking, the arrival of a disc-shaped flying ship seemed to direct my attentions elsewhere. Four men exited the spaceship, wearing the clothing of common men. Knowing them to be angelic hosts, I found their humanness astonishing. Swift to let me know that I must now return to my body, my protestations were of no avail, as they firmly directed a wave of their hands towards my spirit. Within less than a second, I was gone.

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Melissa, my daughter, had an experience (March 1, 2001):

"You, Dad and I were riding down a snow-covered hill upon a large inflatable sled. Before we knew it, we had suddenly gone into deep water and all had been submerged. Somebody was pulling me above the water, and when I emerged from the depths, I shouted out for you and Dad. Dad was walking towards me . . . on the water . . . but you were nowhere to be found. Going underneath the water, I found your body and lifted it up above the water, but realized that you had died."

"Up in the distance, Dad and I were stunned, as we watched your spirit walking towards the sunset, which was of an unusual brilliance. An outline of a gate, perhaps the gates of heaven, was outlined in the sky and lit by the light of the sun. Beautiful music of angels singing could be heard coming from beyond heaven's gates in welcome. Wearing a robe of gleaming and pure white, you turned to us and waved good-bye. Asking me to watch out for my little brother and sister, you shouted, "I love you!" as I shouted it back. "You'll have to look out for yourself now, and learn to handle problems without my guidance." Dad was just looking towards the scene with shock, as if he couldn't believe that this had happened so quickly and unexpectedly."

This moment marked the time that I decided I must push my doctors to figure out what was wrong with me, and when they finally identified the anomalous illness, a shockwave would burst throughout our home.
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Although I was not yet aware of what really plagued my potential corpse, my mortality was beginning to seem very real to me. Coughing uncontrollably for several weeks before, I was also experiencing severe chest pain.

As the death knoll began, I began to leave my

body, immediately noticing an older man and woman quickly approaching my spirit. Emotionally wrapped up in the bliss of separation, I could still feel the pain of my body, however, as they came nearer. "We have to do something," the woman said, "she's leaving her body." Immediately I knew that she was not concerned about me taking a little journey, but that I might be leaving my body in a more permanent way through death. Without any further adieu, the man came towards me with a needle containing adrenaline and another drug which began with an 'F' and had a very long name. Interrupting his approach, I said, "Wait a minute, I think I'm having a stroke. Don't give me anything that would make that worse." Looking at me hastily, he conveyed that he knew what he was doing, and without waiting a second longer, he plunged the needle into my arm. At that very second, my eyes popped open in the physical realm.
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Alit with warnings regarding the dangerous state of my health, angels shouted in my ears, "*Emergency, Emergency,*" as they showed me a picture of my heart. Something was deathly wrong. "You must accept that you are very sick, and do *absolutely* nothing!" Appearing as if I was pushing myself too hard, I agreed as the angels disappeared.

Finding out the next day that I was in severe heart failure due to a condition known as Peripartum Dilated Cardiomyopathy, my heart was enlarged, functioning poorly, thinned out, and suffering from a generally terminal heart muscle disease, which they believed had been caused by a rare complication of pregnancy. Preparing to be evaluated for heart transplant, I allowed the news to sink in.
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Approaching me in liturgical robes of the purest

white, I recognized him as a priest who had spent his lifetime fighting for the rights of the unborn. Coming to embrace me, he conveyed, "I am joyous that you are willing to sacrifice your life, so that Mary and Jacob may live." Because my illness had come about due to pregnancy, he seemed to understand that when my time of death did come, that it would be a sacrifice. In the meantime, my daily life as someone who had become greatly disabled due to heart failure would also be an offering to the Lord.

Looking at my three children through a clear pane of glass, an old nun was carefully watching over them. "If you are to die," she conveyed, "they will be all right."

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Although my soul bore no memory of the journey to reach this highest of places, I awoke to find myself conscious in the top floor of what was presented to me as the highest building on Earth. Looking down, I noticed that my soul was adorned in a robe of the whitest white with a deep red sash around my shoulder and waist side. Knowing immediately that these robes were energetically linked to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, my soul became radiant with the light of the beatific vision, as all the scars of my worldly life had been removed. Because of the Lupus, I sometimes had visible signs of disease on my body, but these were now gone.

Reveling in this newfound freedom of soul, I received a phone call from below from someone in my current life who was very much caught up in karmic circling. Speaking with urgency, I listened to her with calm and peace, but noticed that as I did, my face began to break out in a rash. Exhaustion began to overtake me, as I politely hung up the phone. Quickly realizing that I must stay off the phone which was linked to those

remaining below, communicating on that level appeared to drag me back into the world of death. Because they were trapped in karmic malaise, they had needs which they wished for me to fulfill which caused this affect. Souls who called wishing me well or desiring to know my status did not cause this phenomenon.

As soon as I understood this mechanism, I was led to the door. Looking below, I noticed that this 'building' was a way-station floating above the clouds in the sky. Without further adieu, I became unconscious.
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Surprisingly, I felt more pressure to perform once I got seriously ill, than I had before getting sick, and it appeared to be due to people's general judgment of everything I did or didn't do. Now under close scrutiny, everything was subject to a general appraisal of whether or not I was fighting hard enough, being sufficiently positive, or feeling sorry for myself.

Because it is one of the worst things that can happen to you, I found that most people generate little compassion and can be quite insensitive to such serious illness. Although they seem quite capable of feeling compassion for much smaller issues, things they can relate to, death can be a very humbling experience, because the world lets you know that it'd be fine with them if you should slip quietly off into the night, not bothering them with the difficulties encountered in disability, or the grief you may feel about your own demise.
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Many people can be insensitive, although I'm sure unintentionally, when someone is passing from this world.

There are two things a person who is leaving this world needs to know: 1) that their existence had

meaning, to themselves and to others, and 2) that their death will not go unnoticed.

People who are dying, especially those who are unusually young or leaving children behind, need to know that others consider their death tragic, rather than insisting that they must see something good and wonderful in their demise. Rather than being helpful, telling a dying person all the 'positive' ways they can see their own demise is insulting and negates the seriousness of their loss. Invalidating the meaning behind the person's life, it forces them to feel that their existence really doesn't matter all that much to others, and it shoves the soul prematurely into the humbling realization that they, too, shall die, and the world will go on as if they'd never lived.

Allow me to give you a listing of things that are always said to terminal patients, which should be abandoned: 1) Everybody's going to die, I could die before you do. 2) Everybody has their problems, just get over it and move on. 3) If only you thought more 'positive,' had more 'faith,' engaged in proper 'conduct,' practiced the correct 'religion,' thought 'properly' or took this 'supplement,' you would be healed. 4) Just get up and force yourself to go on, stop being lazy. 5) You are feeling better, aren't you?

Telling a person that anybody could go at anytime is insensitive and invalid. A terminal patient is facing death at *this* moment, and unfortunately, because terminal patients rarely know exactly when their demise shall come, death becomes an inseparable part of their lives; because it could happen at any time, or it could be delayed for years.

Aside from this, terminal patients usually face physical disability during this time-frame, and the pain and limitation they experience almost constantly,

remains a continual reminder that their body is slowly failing and death will eventually occur. Somebody who goes suddenly, usually does not know that it is coming for more than a few minutes, and they are usually not already disabled and in mourning over the life that they've lost to the illness.

Subsequently, many terminal patients have no choice but to ask for help from people who may resent their need. Ironically, this resentment sometimes builds as the patient fights to live . . . and does. Because many people unconsciously project onto the seriously ill patient that it would be more convenient to others if they would either hurry up and have a miraculous and complete recovery or . . . die; survival, at the expense of remaining sick or disabled, can be used against you. And it is common to feel this from family, caregivers *and* medical professionals, as a patient may feel guilty about requiring assistance from the very busy medical profession.

Comparable only to a doctor telling someone that they *may* statistically die in a car accident or of a terminal illness sometime before they turn ninety-five, such analogies should never be used with someone who faces imminent illness and death.

Judged as having brought this calamity upon themselves either by wrong thinking, insufficient faith, or incorrect religious beliefs, they may also be regarded as lazy by those who have never experienced an illness which slaps you right down on your butt, making it impossible to do the things you once did with ease.

In order to insure that you don't express the sometimes sad reality which occupies most days due to your illness, people will say, "You *are* feeling better, aren't you?" As if 'not feeling better' somehow indicates a failure on your part, this is also taken as a warning not

to 'go there,' so the patient behaves and says, "Oh, of course." Despite the obvious reality that a terminal illness is so because it has no cure, it will continue as is or will progress until you die (unless you are one of the people who is honored to receive a miraculous intervention from the Lord). Allow me to make this clear; it doesn't improve, the patient remains sick and disabled according to their disease, and it is likely to get worse, rather than better.

Because most people haven't experienced illness which does not go away, they keep wondering why you won't just get better, and in order to quell the terror they have of their own mortality, they revert back to the incorrect thinking which got you into this mess in the first place. After all, if you do everything wrong and they do everything right, than they are safe from this ever happening to them. Right?

Talking about death is absolutely forbidden with most people, even those close to you, and doing so puts you at risk of being accused of not 'fighting the good fight,' not being 'positive,' and being 'morbid.' Although this begs the obvious question, wouldn't you have to be a total moron not to *even consider* your own death, if you have an 85% chance of meeting it within five years? Perchance, it should be considered that our death is the most significant spiritual event of our lives, and in the case of a terminal patient, it is imminent and impending. Wanting to know the prognosis, seeking statistics, or wishing to discuss what will happen to your body as the disease progresses, is also a no-no; although most terminal patients genuinely need this information in order to battle their disease and prepare for what is to come.

A person faced with terminal illness faces the difficult task of balancing fight and hope with

preparation for death. Because it is deemed a probability, those who shirk speaking about death to their loved ones, simply ignore a true, meaningful need. Although the living may not be comfortable talking about death, the dying *need* to talk about it, just as a bride wishes to speak of her upcoming wedding, and a couple needs to speak of marriage. People need to talk about what they are going through, and the very best thing you can say to someone faced with a catastrophic moment in their lives (whether it be a terminal illness, or another catastrophic loss or event) is that it sucks! As opposed to being negative, this validates the pain and suffering involved, and the loss of something as great as a life. When validated, tragedy can be processed productively. Invalidated, it remains as a searing pain upon the soul.

The most difficult aspect of a terminal diagnosis is that a patient must prepare for life and death at the same time, having no idea when the moment shall come. Losing their future, their dreams, and the plan they had for their life, the terminal patient must also prepare to lose *every single person* in their life. As opposed to the one loss that will be suffered by those they leave behind, the dying patient loses all their loved ones in one fell swoop, in this lifetime and this world. Anticipating a future in both worlds, accepting the limitation of disability, you must prepare to continue a fruitful and rewarding existence while living in a precarious limbo.

It is in these moments that true epiphanies arise in most every soul, things which those of us not yet at this juncture could gain from, true knowledge behind the mystery of our existence . . . if we would but listen. (Many souls are very compassionate to those in their suffering, but I share with you not only my own experience, but the identical thoughts shared with me by several other terminally ill patients. Because many

people don't know what to say to someone who faces a catastrophic situation, I thought it would be helpful for people to understand what is going through *their* mind, and the things that can be hurtful if said at this time. Hopefully, this gives a better perspective on that which is helpful to a person facing a life crisis, and makes it easier to avoid the unintentional invalidations which occur regularly amidst our society.)
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Although I had never played the trumpet before, beautiful and celestial music came from the instrument which now adorned my lips. My instruments had been the flute, bassoon, guitar and piano, but never the trumpet. Looking around me, I realized that I was playing with a celestial band of some sort.

A very tall man with short brown feathered hair was conducting, and he wore royal navy-blue clothing which was designed in galactic fashion. Rims around the shoulders to indicate high rank, the clothing itself had the consistency of vinyl.

As the band stopped playing for a moment, I heard a complaint from the back of the room. Noticing the person who expressed concern, I recognized him. 'Has he died?' I thought. "What's she doing playing the trumpet?" he protested loudly, "she's only played the flute in the past, she will ruin our sound!" Surprised by this unwelcome response, I was quiet. Replying immediately, the conductor said, "I have given her a special gift," he said very calmly, as I took notice of how well I had been playing despite my total lack of experience. "She is here because I wish her to be here. She has accomplished many things on subtle levels of energy which qualifies her to be here."

Boldly, I turned to the conductor who appeared so majestic. "Who are you?" I asked. Pausing a moment,

he looked directly into my eyes. "Gabriel," he said, "as in the Archangel . . . Gabriel." Dumbfounded, I stared at him but said nothing more as my soul was whisked into a school building.

On the walls were hundreds of signs, all reading, 'Don't lose Hope. Remain Positive.' Walking over to the registration desk, I was fearful of acknowledging my status because I thought I was too sick to be accepted. "All who come here are in catastrophic situations," the lady said, "I believe you are here because you are waiting on a heart transplant?"

Looking at her with horror, my medications had helped my heart to function better. Although I'd been evaluated for transplant, and those with my condition almost always eventually need one (or die first), I was considered 'stable,' for the moment. Another possible obstacle was Lupus, in that it is a systemic disease which could disqualify me from having one altogether.

Saying nothing, I turned to notice that several people had arrived, including the person who had been unkind. Coming to apologize they expressed their loyalty to Archangel Gabriel. Apparently, it was their duty to apologize for their insolence. Quietly nodding my acceptance of their apology, I was gone.

Awaking in astral form in my bedroom, my spirit walked over to a mirror and noticed that my body had swelled up as if in acute heart failure. Returning to bed, I awoke.

Although my body was not swelling in any unusual way, I'd had a lot of chest pain recently and knew this to be a warning about the vulnerability of my body, and the need for caution and care. This began the now continual process which would be my life from here on out, going back and forth from relative stability to severe illness to the doorway of death . . . and back. For

the remainder of my life (unless I got a transplant someday), I would ride the gateway between worlds on a daily basis.
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CHAPTER FOUR

The Massacre yet Holiness of Illness, Beauty of the Way of the Cross, Learning to Deal with Ever Increasing Levels of Pain, Compassion for those who have not yet Underwent the Fires of Suffering, the Unspoken Love and Concern of Others, Keeping up the Fight.

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Showing me the scene of a massacre, it clearly represented what had happened to our family since the diagnosis. As it was completely restored, I felt the presence of someone very holy.

Catapulted into the presence of Padre Pio, I couldn't see him, but *felt* him filling every corner of the room. Enveloping me in love and acceptance, he conveyed to me a certain peace about my condition, and that it was, indeed, God's will. "I implore you to be at peace regarding your illness. I, for one, am elated and joyful that you have been allowed to share in the sufferings of Christ, totally without merit on your part."

An angel came down from the sky with a gift for me which I *knew* to be from Jesus. Handing me a beautiful medal of Padre Pio, it slowly transformed into a Padre Pio rosary which was identical to the St. Francis rosary I currently owned. Feeling his presence around me, he conveyed, "You are following the way of the cross." As it was an honor to share in the sufferings of Christ, he was guiding me through his letters which contained much advice regarding suffering and the holy state with which we can be endowed when we come to such a juncture in our own lives.

Unexpectedly, a life-size statue of the Virgin Mary appeared in front of me in the image of 'Our Lady of Guadeloupe.' Having been painted rather sloppily, I

thought how disrespectful this was of its benefactress. Around the eyes, the paint overlapped and bled into the cheeks and there were no clear lines in the paint job.

Having immediately bowed before the statue, I knew that Mary was present in the room. Within the distorted image, I felt the full presence, power and fullness of the Mother of God, despite these flaws. Mary wished for me to see that an imperfect body does not disguise a soul reaching for perfection. The suffering demonstrated on the image of the Blessed Mother, represented the spiritual transformation which we undergo . . . through the sufferings of this world.

Without warning another full-size statue appeared, this time in the image of 'Our Lady of Fatima.' Exquisite and painted to perfection, I again bowed, realizing that the true beauty of a soul is always realized by God, despite the horrific image which suffering may make upon our bodies at the time of its fruition.

Whole and complete, Mary's immensity filled me yet again, as I stayed on my knees in the power of her presence. "Your suffering comes about through the absolute will of God, and you are to be at peace. I am pleased with the manner in which you have endured your trial, and the Lord is pleased in that which you are learning." Love, peace, joy and calm came from the Creator, through the Blessed Mother and Padre Pio.

Giving thanks, I lowered my head in humility at her presence as they disappeared.

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Entering into a religious bookstore which seemed to be placed in a happenstance manner along the parkway, an old woman approached me. Showing me a white casket, she spoke in a very serious tone. "Your grandmother has a burial site for you." (My grandmother is deceased.) Placing a medal around my neck, I

observed that it was an image of the Divine Mercy, a special Catholic devotion especially suited for the suffering and the dying.

Awaking in a dream, I instinctually looked downwards towards my feet which were pitch black, much like that of a decomposing body. Surrounded in light and wearing a gown of the most subtle and pale blue, a woman stood at the foot of my bed quietly. Though her skin was fair and very beautiful, she lifted her hands which had been hidden at her sides. Upon her palms was a thick layer of black paint which resembled my feet. Showing them to me, I understood.

It has become interesting to me in my journey of death to realize that between illnesses, accidents, malfeasant acts, etc., that there are a great many people on this Earth who do not live very long. Some die in childhood, and others sometimes pass during their twenties or thirties. Despite this constant reminder of our own mortality, I have noticed that very few people seem to actually contemplate their own death, but rather, they are constantly thinking of their future plans in this world. This is interesting because any one of us could be standing at the judgment seat of God within one or two minutes of any given moment.

If you were to die right this minute, would you be ready to stand at the judgment seat of God . . . right now?! Though we must take care of matters which deal with our continued existence upon the earth, we must never forget that this is a temporary abode from which we can be snatched at any given moment. At that moment, all that we have upon this earth will be spontaneously taken away. Only those things we have done which hold eternal value will come with us, and all of our future plans will be irrevocably altered.

As the bible states so very clearly, death is

appointed for all . . . and then the judgment.
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Pounding fiercely to demonstrate my palpitations, the metallic body also had an approximately one and a half foot in diameter metal patch in the center of the chest which protruded outward from the body to demonstrate the enlargement of the heart and the power of the palpations. Next to it was a metallic body which represented a normal, healthy person. Pointing to the metallic form whose heart was pounding, the scientist standing next to it said, "How long do you think *that* can go on?" Despite reassurances from my doctor that I had a while to live, it seemed I was being warned that my future was not so set in stone. Vowing to be more careful so this status would occur as infrequently as possible, I heeded the warning.
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Taken to a warehouse, many things had been stored here, but I immediately noticed that amongst the various garbage of this realm . . . were huge statues of exquisite beauty representing the Way of the Cross! Approaching, the first one I noticed was a bigger than life size depiction of a scene of the Blessed Virgin Mary bowing before the tomb of her son as two twenty-foot high angels stood before it. But as I looked upon this, I noticed that others had been well-hidden behind other things. Looking upon them, statues began to materialize all over the place. Life size, the Way of the Cross appeared first in complete order. Touching the thorns upon Christ's head on the statue which depicted the crowning with thorns, I found myself especially drawn to Jesus Carrying His cross.

Internally, it was conveyed that the hugeness of these statues represented the prime force which suffering was now taking in my own life, my own Way

of the Cross. As this path was forged all around me, life-size statues of various saints began to appear and I mused in wonder at them.

A band of roving thieves had come upon the warehouse with evil intentions to cause me harm, and I began shooting them with a tranquilizer gun. As they lay sleeping on the floor before me, a voice said, "You may fight your disease and put it to sleep at times, but you cannot destroy it. It will come again."

Gazing upon Jesus Carrying His cross, I fantasized about having such a marvelous remnant in my own yard to constantly remind me of the glorious nature of this path of suffering. Perhaps, I could gather these stone figures within my soul to remind me of such things. "God is good," I thought, as I continued to repeat this over and over even as I awoke. "God is good, God is good, God is good . . . "

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Given to witness how another person might respond to the level of pain I experienced on a regular basis, I was surprised to see that this male individual for whom I was given to watch was screaming out in agony. "You are a very strong person to be able to endure such increasing levels of pain," an angel said, "and others might very well be shocked to feel what goes on beneath the surface while exteriorly you are able to conceal the pain as if you are in perfect health." Grateful for this, I nodded.

Several days later, my spirit was led through the experience of a 'sudden death.' Within less than a moment, my transcendental nature had been separated from my body and I was hovering in a very soothing dimension imbued with the color of peaches upon the horizon. Despite this environment, I was anything but soothed, as I began to fight to return to my bodily form

in the other world. Knowing I must return to my children, I fought with my entire strength, but the divide was sealed and there was nothing further I could do.

For this moment, I experienced the amazing shock of sudden death. Lamenting the loss of my life with my husband and children, a voice echoed across this peach-colored horizon. “Your chest pain is not ‘Nothing,’ it said, in response to what I’d been told by my doctors, "Your doctors have missed something, and you are at high risk of sudden death. Be very careful . . ."

Feeling the presence of my friend trying to protect me from this imminent destiny which had taken her, the divide opened and I turned to cross.

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Concluding many things, I observed several truths which are relevant to us all. Firstly, until somebody has truly undergone the purifying fires of suffering and death, either through their own mortality or that of somebody very, very close, they simply do not understand the catastrophic nature of terminal illness. Secondly, people choose not to go there because of their unwillingness to face mortality and death in their own life, and being judgmental of those who are walking this road is a very convenient method of denying that death, too, comes to us all. Thirdly, to face such things is a true gift from God, because it completely severs our belief in our own self-sufficiency, and makes us render to God what is His. Fourthly, to experience the loss of life and the loss of property simultaneously creates a very healthy awareness of the impermanence of this life and everything in it, reminding us that our heavenly homeland is our true destination, and that we must not rely or allow ourselves the delusion of feeling safe in a

world which guarantees only one thing, that no one will get out of it alive.

Continuing to observe my soul being battered within the confines of the Eucharistic Tabernacle, I gave great thanks for this unusual experience, because it carried with it the greater knowledge of life . . . and death. And as I sat observing this phenomenon, it became clear to me that we truly had been blessed above all others in our suffering, because it had been in this journey into losing everything, that we had become whole and our love for one another had increased tenfold. Detachment was now a daily aspect of our lives, and in this we had brought eternity into the confines of our family from what had previously been a limited, confined and selfish love. Agape had come down from heaven and entered into all of our hearts. God is always good, and infinite in His wisdom, and it is wonderful to realize this amidst tragedy when we are usually confounded rather than enlightened.

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Accompanied by a male angel, a woman who had died of heart failure came to encourage me to fight. Showing me a heart transplant in progress, it was indicated that two major complications could arise in my case, but I should accept a transplant if it were to be offered. "Do this for your children," she said.

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Entering into a house, I saw four people I'd known in the past arrive at my door and leave something underneath it. When I went to retrieve it, I was surprised and moved to find that it was a set of cards with lists of hundreds of names of people I had known throughout my life, many of whom had recently found out about my condition, all expressing concern and sorrow. As I held

the cards, I felt their concern deeply and realized some very important things.

Although people may say or do weird things in such a situation as this, it doesn't necessarily mean that they care any less. Even those who say things that come across as hurtful probably don't really mean the things they say. Because it is an awkward situation for both parties, the sick person feels like they must constantly validify how they're handling it, what they're doing about it, and whether or not they have the proper mental attitude; while those who come to visit have no idea what they should say. As a result, the *oversensitivity* of the terminal patient can make the visitor feel more *self-conscious* about their words, and that *sensitivity* can make the terminal patient more *self-conscious* about every word that is said. People do really care, which is what is truly important, although the way they show it can sometimes appear otherwise.

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Running through the canyons, I was deep in the crevasse of rock. Another angelic guardian ran beside me, repeating over and over, "Keep pushing! Keep pushing!" Continuing to run, my spirit wasn't finished until the end of the night. As I finally had run all the way back to the top of the deep canyon, my spirit and body were exhausted. "Keep pushing," she repeated with a smile as I breathed loudly.

In her eyes was a message; my spirit and body were being brought back, and the Lord wished for me to push myself in order to recondition my body which had been deteriorating for so long due to heart failure.

Suddenly, I was back. After a three-hour surge of heat had entered my body and filled it a week or so before, the Lord was bringing me back from the threshold of death, and preparing me to get to work on

my next task. "Keep pushing," she repeated with a knowing smile as we both disappeared.
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Images and mirages penetrated my vision as the Lord filled me with a deeper understanding of my next task. Worried that I may not be able to contain what had been shown to me, I pondered before leaving the mystical realm as to how I would bring it back into the physical world and remember it. Despite my best efforts, I returned with no further memory of the experience beyond the profound knowledge that I'd seen something of magnificence and great import.

Returning to the spirit world, my soul was taken to join the members of a large family. Two parents and six children, I was saddened to learn that one of the older boys who appeared to be in his early twenties was dying of Cardiomyopathy, a disease I shared. Talking with him, he said, "My doctors have told me that there is nothing more we can do, I am close to death."

Having walked that road myself, I was deeply moved by the sorrow of this family. At the dinner table, I sat next to him and his mother, and quietly listened as they spoke of the hardship of this cruel situation. Placing my arm around her shoulder, I spoke to his mother. "Several weeks ago, I was in the same position." I said. "And today, the Lord has brought me back. Do not lose hope." (My condition had improved in part due to a change in medication, but it was my sincere belief that there was also divine intervention [an episode of heat] involved because it had improved so dramatically that the medication change seemed an unlikely source of the entire transformation. My belief was that I'd improved dramatically due to both factors, and that God was bringing me back to some degree, perhaps to make it possible for me to continue working; but to what level or

for how long, we didn't yet know. My condition remained terminal but stable for the moment, and hopefully for years to come.)

My words were not that helpful, and I fully understood, because I'd been in their shoes just weeks before. When actually engaged in the battle, you have no idea of how it will end. You cannot expect people engaged in warfare for the life of themselves or a loved one, to focus on hope alone.

A grieving process is underway which is normal and required, in order for the soul to prepare for whatever outcome may cross their doorstep. Because statistically speaking, death is very often a greater probability than a healing of any kind, and death is a journey which is usually taken without the traveler's conscious consent.

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Appearing in a flash of white, the doctor came towards me with a gleeful smile adorning his face. A grand energy of power came with him as he began to relate to me how well I had done in my fight to live. "You've really fought the good fight," he said, "and you've done a lot of good things along the way." Looking at him, my gaze conveyed, 'Oh, really?' Speaking of some of the doctors that I'd had over the past couple of years, he said, "You've taught them so much, and this will help them in the future with other patients. Do you really have any idea how well you've done?" Nodding 'No,' he continued, "I've had five other patients with the same condition you had and they are all dead. You have a *huge* will to live. God is pleased with you!" Smiling, I began to loosen up a bit.

Deep in my heart I was very happy to realize that, in God's eyes, I had really put up the good fight; although at the same time I realized that my survival was

also an incredibly merciful act of God granted through the prayer of others. My choices and actions helped me in my fight to live, but they did not determine the outcome. God alone determined that outcome. So many people put up the good fight when faced with incredible odds and they still die through ***no*** fault of their own. Death in and of itself is not a failure, because we all will eventually lose that fight. But for the moment, God was allowing me to enjoy the momentary and meaningful victory which had prolonged my life in the meantime.
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CHAPTER FIVE

How People Want you to Keep Doing Things that you can No Longer Do, Experiencing What it's Like to Live in a Body Devoid of Mental and Physical Function, Sensing Love, Hate and Indifference, Perception of Laziness, Isolation, Getting Worse and Getting Better, Heavenly Helpers, True Discipleship - Doing that which is Needed Rather than that which You'd Prefer, Deterioration, Surrendering the Physical Vessel to Weakness.

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Lying in the middle of the room in an easy chair suspended in space, all those who could not understand my condition were gathering around me in agitation. "We need to build a hospital over there," one said, as another pointed in the same direction and said, "and a school there!" Completely unconscious, I was unable to respond. "Why won't she get up and ***do*** something?!?!?!?!" One said to the other, as she responded with equal disdain and confusion.

Suddenly, out of the ether began to appear angels. Three or four Female angels with white robes and wings were gathered in a small circle around my chair watching over me. As the people continued to ask over and over, "Why won't she get up and ***do*** something?!?!?!?!" the angels replied, "Because her heart doesn't work." Although they said it many times, it appeared that I was the only one who could see or hear them. Smiling at me, they filled me with assurance that I was not lazy, just sick.

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In the spirit world, I was taken into the heavens to receive a message. We'd been reaching out to

somebody on the Earth in regards to our mission with the music which had been given to me, and this person came to me in the astral and said, "Let's go ahead and do a demo and see what happens." Smiling with glee, I turned to my left and saw my former priest hovering in the heavens. Wearing his green robes, he smiled hugely and gave me a thumbs up. Ecstatic, I understood that because he had died and crossed over, he now understood my purpose and was supporting me. Giving him a thumbs up back, a small cell phone which had been attached to his garment began ringing. As it rang, I saw an image of the old woman calling. Father smiled and said, "Gotta take this, still a priest, you know." Understanding, I left him to assist.

Suddenly, my spirit was in the body of an older person who was unable to respond to external stimulus. For several moments, I experienced what it felt like to be in that body. Interestingly, I was very much aware of all that was going on around me, although I could not speak or move my body in any way in and of myself. In a nursing home environment, there were many people who were saying things all around me. Noticing that many said very unkind things, this was very hurtful. When one woman came over and spoke to me with kindness and tenderness, her act of generosity meant so much to me. Although I remained unable to respond, I understood the energies of love and hate that were coming towards me and others in the home. What an eye-opening experience this was to see that even those who may be so sick that they are completely unable to utilize their physical or mental faculties understand the energies of love, hatred or indifference which come towards them. They feel it profoundly.

Returning to consciousness for only a few moments, I drifted back into the astral states to

experience a warning. As I was getting up to tend to my son, I was walking towards his bedroom when suddenly time became suspended and appeared as if in slow-motion. In an instant, I was experiencing everything from outside of my body, as I watched my body fall in slow motion to the floor. I didn't feel the impact. My husband was kneeling over my body saying, "Oh, no. I think it's time to call 911." "Oh, no," I shouted to him, "I'm right here, I'm fine." But as I said this, I realized that I was sitting outside my body and my body was truly dead. Feeling the profundity of the warning, I knew that I must never take for granted my physical health because it was still very tenuous.

Before I could think or respond to this situation, a huge demonic attack ensued. An invisible demonic force had taken control of my body and was throwing me around the room, as I no longer had control of my spiritual being. Repeating over and over, I said, "I command you to leave in the name of Jesus Christ, I command you to leave in the name of Jesus Christ, I command you to leave in the name of Jesus Christ . . ." But I was making little or no progress, until my eldest daughter appeared on the scene. Noticing my condition, she knelt on the floor and began to pray with me. In a few moments, I was liberated from the demonic attack. A Satanist had recently begun harassing me through the internet because of his hatred for God and those like me doing His work. I was made very much aware that this assault had come from him. Taking note, I arose feeling unwell but rested up and prepared for what may be to come.

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Standing behind our home in the astral state, I was wearing a flimsy white gown staring off into the distance. All was well behind our home, but I noticed

that somebody else's yard was now next to ours and that a huge tidal wave was coming towards it.

This person was a very kind and generous person, but had fallen prey to suggestions of demonic persecution. As a result, she had become very unkind to us, spreading gossip and rumors about me not really being very sick, but just lazy. Because this gossip had continued to spread, I had lost many friends and acquaintances. People I had to deal with in daily life like teachers and other medical or religious personnel developed preconceived notions about me that I could not suppress. Those who had previously come to visit, no longer did so. Their suspicions had been aroused and no matter what I would say or do, I couldn't undo the damage of the frothful words that had been spoken of me. So, she really had done some harm.

But I had chosen to generally forget about it, because I knew that many people who face long-term catastrophic illness are easily misunderstood. It is one of those things in life that cannot be known unless one has traveled its road. At some point, you either accept that many people will judge and misunderstand you and be okay with that; or you drive yourself crazy trying to change what usually cannot be changed.

What happens in such cases of 'demonic persecution' is that those people who do not guard their minds, who do not recognize dark forces which can interfere with their thinking; become very easily manipulated by them as they make suggestions to them about other people, situations, etc., which may very well be untrue. Demons will present it to a person as if it were their own thought. Because it is also then presented to them as a strong gut feeling, or a powerful feeling of enmity; they may choose to believe it to be true and proceed forth from there. In this way, many 'demonic

persecutions' are undertaken by the dark side.

Literally, they gather around a person or place in hordes and continually suggest falsehoods about a colleague, a friend, a neighbor, or anybody for which they've received permission from God to 'try by fire.' Those who are not paying attention and carefully scrutinizing their thoughts will most likely immediately fall right into line with the 'demonic persecution.' Those who take the time to think carefully about whether or not what is coming into their head makes any sense or has any basis in fact may be able to realize that it is a demonic suggestion and refuse to participate. It is all about free will, choice and discernment.

Suddenly, my family was in a room with this woman and her family and friends. She began to again go on and on about all the things I should be doing, how lazy I was, and what a rotten mother I was for not doing this or that (despite the fact that I couldn't physically do them), etc. etc. Walking closer to her, I said, "You really should be ashamed of yourself." Continuing in a very calm and quiet way, I continued, "Your entire life's work centers around the importance of families and taking care of their needs, but you have allowed yourself to be so influenced by dark forces as to be unable to generate a single ounce of compassion for a mother of three young children with a terminal illness."

A huge bolt of lightning came down from heaven and struck her with force. As she stared forward in a daze of shock, I waited for a reply. But it took many moments for her to respond. "Oh, my God!" She cried. "I'm so sorry, I'm so sorry." Placing her hands over her face, she began to cry uncontrollably as the lightning bolt had awakened her from her sleep, making her realize that she had truly totally misjudged our family and had been deceived. This was difficult for her to accept,

because she didn't previously think she could have been capable of making a bad judgment such as this.

Everybody got very quiet as she continued to bawl. Finally, I went over to her and picked her up and placed my arms around her. Hugging her tightly, I said, "It's okay, we understand. We forgive you." After she began to calm down, I said, "You know the funny thing about this is that you and I probably would've been great friends if it hadn't been for this stupid thing which has always been in the way." (We had a lot in common, actually.) "Maybe now that it's out of the way, that can happen." She nodded, still in tears, as if she were open to that happening. Again, I hugged her, "It's okay." I repeated. "We truly do understand. It's okay . . ."

"Now if any one should wonder, whence those who had at first been of this last class, now are so different, let him learn that affliction was the cause, affliction, that school mistress of heavenly wisdom, that mother of piety. When riches were done away with, wickedness also disappeared."

The Complete Writings of the Early Church Fathers, Nicene and Post Nicene, Volume 11, Homily 7, (Christianity: Catholic, Words of St. John Chrysostom)

"For the dreams that disturbed them had proclaimed this beforehand, lest they perish unaware of why they suffered ill."

The New American Bible, Old Testament, Wisdom 18:19, (Christianity, Judaism)

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Standing in the canyon with the mesa's surrounding me, I suddenly heard a beckoning female voice. "The spirit is calling you from the Earth." She said. Within moments, buffalo in motion began appearing out of the ether until there was a gigantic herd of several thousand all around me. Looking upon the buffalo with a sense of holiness, I knew great meaning lay beneath

their appearance. Gratitude for gifts received and a beckoning call to return those gifts to others filled my spirit. Sometimes we are called to pray, and sometimes we are called to become an answer to someone else's prayers. At this moment, I felt a call to both.

Before I could ascertain all that was coming to pass, a wall of water came crashing towards us. The wave took myself and the buffaloes into its current as we began traveling 'into the spiritual waters' towards an unseen destination.

Recently, a woman with an advanced disease had come into my life. It felt to me that the medicine women from throughout the ages were calling me to be her friend for she had been praying for one. In a subsequent experience, I was instructed to treat her as family. And it would be so . . .

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Entering my former home which was no longer compatible to me, I was shown some things about my own reality which were important for me to observe. The doors locked behind me as I entered and I became almost completely isolated. Realizing that the lack of social life and relationships among friends had caused in this previous location the absence of a vital energetic requirement for my life-force to remain healthy and vigorous; it was shown to me that this vital energetic requirement was better in our current location, but still required improvement.

Because I am a mother of three responsible for my children 24 hours a day and seven days a week, I entered my isolation with a certain sense of resignation. And there was purpose to this isolation; it was simply out of proportion to the needs of my soul. My isolation provided a monastic environment for which I was able to study and write. But as I stood alone in the house, a

guide came into the home.

Appearing as a man in about his forties, he had dark black hair but was slightly balding. Wearing a baseball uniform, he was laughing and cracking jokes among his friends who had come with him. Inexplicably, I began laughing and falling into a state of relaxation with them. Despite my usual solitary manner, I experienced for a moment how refreshing and fun it could be to be able to have friendly outlets from my continually serious existence in raising three children, reading ancient sacred texts and never leaving the house. Allowing me to observe, it became clear that this need to have human contact and friendships outside of my marriage and family was not wrong on my part. Despite the recent temptation which had come through another person in the form of the carnivorous demon, denying myself of all friendships was causing me actual physical and spiritual harm.

There is a time in the spiritual life when absolute solitude is not only preferred but necessary; when the soul is young and inexperienced in the riding of temptation. In this solitude a soul is able to cultivate the virtues and extricate the vices, becoming a better shepherd of its senses. But as the soul progresses, sometimes the Lord calls the soul out of that solitude, asking it to trust again in itself and its ability to discern and disarm temptation as it may arise . . . for the purpose of fellowship.

"Be well prepared and well minded; join your hands: he who is affectionate and merciful to the world is going to speak, is going to pour endless rain of the law and refresh those that are waiting for enlightenment."

Saddharma Pundarika or the Lotus of the True Law, Introduction, No. 99, (Buddhism: Mahayana)

"Come aside to me, you untutored, and take up lodging in the house of instruction; How long will you be

deprived of Wisdom's food, how long will you endure such bitter thirst? I open my mouth and speak of her: gain, at no cost, wisdom for yourselves. Submit your neck to her yoke, that your mind may accept her teaching. For she is close to those who seek her, and the one who is in earnest finds her."

The New American Bible, Old Testament, Sirach 51:23-26, (Christianity, Judaism)

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As my medical condition appeared to continue to improve, I was taken to observe a map. Upon its fetters was a line drawn showing the journey we had taken from our previous home to our new location. Looking upon the map, my attention was drawn to a schoolroom around me which represented our former home. Teachers were gathering their books to close out the school year and janitors were preparing to close up the building. One of the very humble janitors approached. 'Class is dismissed,' he said. As he said this, I began flying simultaneously at the speed of light towards the location on the map which represented our new home. In the distance, I felt bliss much like that of approaching the Promised Land. The desert oasis in the distance was a liberation from the extended stay we had experienced 'being beaten up inside the Eucharistic Tabernacle,' something which had been shown to me in 'Galactica.' We appeared to be leaving the land of persecution to the land of light. In the distance, the desert oasis beamed with light.

Suddenly, I was standing in our new home. Outside, my huge living room crucifix had been nailed to a large pole. Winds began to stir around it, and I became nervous and afraid that it might blow off the pole and shatter. As the winds picked up, a short but powerful gust blew it off the pole. But rather than shattering, it gently landed on its feet, standing solidly

on the ground by a mystical force. A sense of wonder filled me as I heard a voice in the wind. "You have been taken off the cross," it conveyed. "And rather than being shattered to pieces, you stand tall." Indeed, the crucifix stood tall in the distance as I watched in awe.

Although I still technically had heart failure and would continue to take many meds, I was realizing that in some energetic way I had been taken down from the cross for a time to finish certain heavenly tasks. My condition had improved in a miraculous way and I was doing things now that I never thought I would have been able to do again. Somehow, my life had been restored by God's holy will. Dumbfounded by this phenomenal gift of grace from God, I could only stare. No words came to my lips as I remained silent.

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Within days of this profound experience, I began to cough up small amounts of blood.

Entering into a deepened state, my spirit began to vibrate as the vision of the angels came near to my conscious view. All around me, the spirit wind vibrated with light and my soul entered into an ecstatic view of peace and silence beyond my pain and agitation.

Gently lifting my feet, the angelic forces began to move and manipulate my body in ways which were healing and helpful to my current crisis. In the distance, I could still hear them thinking to one another. "She's experienced bleeding in her lungs, what should we do about this?" One thought, as the other began to instantly respond with energetic assistance to various parts of my body including the chest. It was conveyed to me that I had done the right thing in asking for the divine physician in prayer.

My soul was almost as if in rapture, as utter peace and serenity surrounded me. Continuing to move my

limbs and sending vibrations throughout my body, I surrendered to their assistance as I suddenly noticed my spirit was heading towards some type of gate or door. As I headed towards it, my vision began to go black and I instantly understood I was approaching death.

Uncertain as to whether this death was going to happen or not, I began to observe the goings on. As I came closer to the gate, it seemed as though my physical vision was going further and further black, as if in reference to the process of turning from one state of consciousness to another. Instinctively, I knew that if it were to go full black that I would be dead and ready to begin seeing in my new spiritual vision.

But as I headed towards about 90% black and noticed there was only a small light still shining through my earthly vision, an angel very calmly and quietly approached me and said, "Not yet." Without having a moment to think, I began going back towards the other direction although I was still very unable to associate myself with my earthly self and still regarded myself as bordering on the 'dead.'

Pointing towards my physical body and the Earth which lay almost as if in overlay above it, I looked to see what she wished me to look upon.

My husband was sitting beside the bed waiting. Although I knew he couldn't hear me, I was so happy that he had come and began to speak to him. "I'm so happy that you cared enough to be here for this," I said, "I love you." But he just smiled at me with love, because he couldn't hear me.

Two friends approached, trying to wake my physical body, but unable to do so. As they turned to walk away, one said, "I think she's truly going this time." Although they were very much at peace, I felt their sadness and a certain loss to their souls in my absence

which could in some way be necessary or required for their further movement forward.

Lunging forward, I realized that I could not yet surrender to death. By lunging so, I pulled myself out of the 'death' vibration and back into my physical body. For many moments, I struggled to bring myself back to consciousness. But as I did, the angels hovered above me smiling.

Conveying to me, I felt a sense that despite my exhaustion and fatigue in my earthly burden and battle, there was much more to be done. It appeared to be their wish that I push forward and not give up the fight, and they were prepared to hold me up with supernatural force despite the terminal conditions which raged within my body. Nodding that I understood their wishes, and their calling to come and aid me in times of greater danger, I listened. "God wishes it so," they said, as they whisked off into the heavens and I awoke to greater strength. Immediately, I understood that I wasn't finished yet.

"For he had found many a secret justice in this seeming tyranny of the watchman, and seen how many a mercy lay hid behind the veil. Out of wrath, the guard had led him who was athirst in love's desert to the sea of his loved one, and lit up the dark night of absence with the light of reunion. He had driven one who was afar, into the garden of nearness, had guided an ailing soul to the heart's physician."

The Seven Valleys and The Four Valleys, The Valley of Knowledge, (Bahai', Words of Baha'u'llah)

"Ward off the grief from your heart and put away trouble from your presence, though the dawn of youth is fleeting."

The New American Bible, Old Testament, Ecclesiastes 11:10, (Christianity, Judaism)

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As I'd recently been trying to get some volunteers together to organize a ministry providing for some of the unmet needs of the sick, primarily that of friendship, I'd been inundated with people who felt they weren't 'called' to such a thing, or that they were too 'busy' to sit with a homebound individual who just needed a friend.

Exhausted, I'd gone to sleep flustered in the reality of realizing that I was probably the only one who understood these needs and it would be very difficult to get such a ministry going without the help of others. The problem was, however, that those who had never experienced catastrophic illness just didn't understand or 'get' the needs of those who had them. And those who had catastrophic illnesses, such as I, were generally too sick to do anything requiring endurance or reliability. When you're sick yourself, you never know which days you'll be functional and which ones you will not, so you can't plan ahead or plan to care for another person with any degree of reliability.

Floating around a particular minister's church, I was lying flat on my back indicating the nature of my fatigue. The members were discussing discipleship and seemed utterly obsessed with gaining converts to the faith. Trying to get their attention, I wished to help them understand 'true discipleship,' but they couldn't hear me. As I whisped in frustration, several angels appeared. "You will not live to see this ministry completed." They said. "It must go into the hands of those physically able to accomplish it. Tell the ministers that Discipleship is not about doing what you like to do best, but about doing what needs to be done. This is the sacrifice which makes it pleasing to God. Ask if someone is willing to receive this torch because it needs to be taken, not because the task at hand is pleasing." Nodding yes, I turned.

Suddenly, my body was lying flat but being held

partially upright by a group of many angels who began to sing songs. Asking them questions about my family and other earthly concerns I'd had, they began to sing a song which surprised me. "You'll soon be passing away . . . don't worry about it. It is no longer your concern . . . "As they sang, peace filled me and a detachment from earthly things. Faces of many people I'd known during my life who had passed away appeared before me. Some of them were teachers from my childhood, but they all turned to acknowledge my presence and smiled in welcome. Falling into the music of the angels, I allowed my spirit to rest in their hands.
****

Sitting quietly in my home preparing to go back into my body, a doctor who had seen me once appeared in my room with great urgency. His sub-conscious astral soul appeared to have a message for me, but I was confused by this since we had barely known each other. "Why would you receive a message for *me*?" I asked. "We barely even met." Breathless in his urgency, he said, "What you must understand is that when two people bond through caring, an energetic union is formed which creates such a possibility. Although you were unaware of how much I had chosen to care about your situation, I energetically latched on with great fervor to your well-being." "Wow." I said with surprise. "I had no idea how much you had cared. After all, I'm just one of many patients. But tell me, what message do you have for me?" "It is this," he replied. "If you continue to work as hard as you have been doing, you will most assuredly die prematurely. You must balance the creative energies that work through you to create more balance." Pausing, I thought of those creative souls throughout time who had literally worked themselves to death by not properly balancing the great eternal impulse which worked

through them. Mozart, for instance. "Thank you," I said, "thank you so much. You're very right, I have been working too compulsively, and I must find more balance. Thank you!" Again, I disappeared and awoke within my body.

"By the Star when it setteth, Your comrade erreth not, nor is deceived; Nor doth he speak of (his own) desire. It is naught save an inspiration that is inspired, Which one of mighty powers hath taught him, One vigorous; and he grew clear to view when he was on the uppermost horizon. Then he drew nigh and came down till he was distant . . . And He revealed unto His slave that which He revealed. The heart lied not (in seeing) what it saw. Will ye then dispute with him concerning what he seeth? And verily he saw him yet another time . . . The eye turned not aside nor yet was overbold."

The Meaning of the Glorious Kuran, Surah LIII, No. 1-17, (Islam, Translator: Marmaduke Pickthall)

"See for yourselves! I have labored only a little, but have found much . . . Work at your tasks in due season, and in his own time God will give you your reward."

The New American Bible, Old Testament, Sirach 51:27, 30, (Christianity, Judaism)

"As to more than these, my son, beware. Of the making of many books there is no end, and in much study there is weariness for the flesh. The last word, when all is heard: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is man's all."

The New American Bible, Old Testament, Ecclesiastes 12:12-13, (Christianity, Judaism)

"And now the hand can write no more, and pleadeth that this is enough. Wherefore do I say, 'Far be the glory of thy Lord, the Lord of all greatness, from what they affirm of Him."

The Seven Valleys and The Four Valleys, The Fourth Valley, (Bahai', Words of Baha'u'llah

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Suddenly, I was spun forth from this lofty sphere into the valleys of the earth below wherein I began to experience a set of frames.

My body was limp as if in Pieta, lying in the arms of this priest in our parish church. Swirling white energies surrounded this scene which was filled with a raw but yet patently quiet emotion. As this scene entered into center frame, several new frames appeared around it of myself with this priest in different locations within the church, the rectory and its offices. They were a continuum, but of what I could not yet ascertain. But I could feel this continual raw yet patently quiet emotion, as if it were to pierce me in crucifixion. From somewhere in a palliatively etheric realm, I heard a resounding echoing voice, "You've got to take care of her, you've got to take care of her . . . "

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And so it came to pass that I began to wander back into the realms of spirit, experiencing things of wonder and awe - like traveling through the starry realms all night; the moon, the sun, the star tunnel - and things of concern.

As my health was going up and down, I entered into a deterioration cycle. My spirit was taken to a jailhouse wherein a man was being held. Satan spoke through him, and St. Michael spoke through me. But my strength waned unexpectedly, and for the first time, I lost a battle with the demonic realm. I couldn't extricate the demonic force from the man, and I felt saddened by this defeat.

In prayer, however, I simply asked for God's will to be done; that I be used for however long I might be of service to the Lord, but that at such a time as my bodily vessel became too weak to follow that warrior path, that

I be replaced by younger, healthier trainees to do the work that I may no longer be able to do.

In a subsequent experience, my prayer was answered me in that I was shown that this weakness was not due to a moral flaw, but only to aging and weakness of the body. I was not to concern myself with it, as God would ordain and send me as He so wished. Perhaps he wished for me to visually experience this waning in spiritual thrust, so I could know and understand that it was a natural part of the path. As none of us can do everything at each stage of our journey, we allow God to determine our portion as we go.
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PART III

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INTRODUCTION:

Suffering:

The Fruits of Utter Desolation

The Lord came upon me in the night during an unusually difficult time in my life. What type of suffering I was undergoing really doesn't matter, but be assured that my health, my physical well-being, my marriage, my children's welfare, my ability to hold a job, my husband's lack of a job and its subsequent loss of medical insurance during a crucial medical crisis were all contributing to the shambles of my life in that moment of my reckoning. And I felt very abandoned by a great deal of my friends and family. Whether or not this was actually true, I felt it to be true at that moment, just as we all do at random difficult moments in our lives.

My great Lord awoke me in the night with a simple command, "Write," he said, "write about the things I am trying to show you through Utter Desolation."

I began to write . . .

CHAPTER ONE

What is God trying to show me through Utter Desolation?

It seems that God is trying to show me several things through utter desolation:

1.) Most people really don't care that much.

2.) True friends are few.

3.) Most things don't really matter.

4.) Everything outside of God is totally nothing.

5.) Religion, when practiced as 'religion' in a legalistic way, is purely heretical and completely contrary to the teachings of the Prophets and the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

6.) Religion, when practiced from a mystical point of view, becomes divine and all-seeing, knowing, feeling and all-powerful.

7.) Priests are not God men; very few have become true Alter Christus - either perfectly or imperfectly.
8.) Hypocrisy rules much religion and many Churches.

9.) It's not okay that this is so.

10.) The moneychangers are in the temple . . .

CHAPTER TWO

If these Suppositions are True, then are these Conclusions also True?

1.) The lies that people believe about you don't matter if God knows they are not true.

2.) There is nothing in this earth that can come close to the beauty of Our Lord.

3.) There is no earthly love (except perhaps between mother and child to some degree) that can come close to the love you experience when you are standing in the Presence of God.

4.) Therefore, ALL ELSE, EXCEPT THE SEEKING OF GOD, has no meaning.

5.) In God's Presence, nothing earthly or physical may change, but everything BECOMES peace.

6.) People who practice Religion very rarely KNOW God.

7.) Those who KNOW God cannot practice Religion well because they MUST move with the spirit.

8.) If they do not move with and become one with the Spirit, they will die.

9.) They will die because once you've KNOWN God, nothing else is sufficient.

10.) So in order to live, they must 'die' to this life and all of its peculiarities, rituals, false piety, falsehoods,

random show - and meet God ALONE.

11.) And when we meet God ALONE, chaos subsides, love becomes all that remains and we cease fruitless movement and activity.

12.) If God is there, it doesn't matter if anyone else is. He is sufficient.

CHAPTER THREE

If these Suppositions are True, then how do we teach worldly souls to cease seeking Him only in ritual and to thirst for private communion with Him?

1.) It would seem that it can only be sought by a few, because too many are attached to worldly views and distractions.

2.) I MUST SEEK MY ONE TRUE LOVE, my Lord, and stay with Him at all times.

3.) His spirit must take me away from the chaos and into the peace.

4.) I MUST STOP SEEKING GOD'S CHARITY IN HUMAN BEINGS, but only in Him ALONE.

5.) I must give Him my whole self - so that whether others choose to do so or not - that I may embody God's charity and be that light that can rarely be seen on earth to my fellow suffering brethren.

6.) I need to give myself completely to my Lord accepting NO intermediaries. This does not mean I cease to honor the position of men who stand in His Presence, but it means that I listen to God first.

7.) I must STORM THE GATES OF HEAVEN with love for my fellow suffering brethren and for His children and DEMAND that they ALL be saved.

8.) But I must do this mystically, so that my steps may be set aright and God's purpose be fulfilled.

9.) I must release all need to be understood, cared for, loved, or for any need and I must do so in total resignation to the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ - in that it will be in suffering that the Lord will become able to move in me. Therefore, if suffering is required to make this possible, I must resign myself totally to His will.

10.) I MUST BE HIS SLAVE, willing to accept whatever hardships He deems necessary.

11.) I must resolve to BECOME the compassion to others which has been denied to me, to BECOME the love which has been denied to me, to BECOME the hope, the faith, the understanding that has been denied to me and to my suffering brethren.

12.) I must STAND for those who cannot, PRAY for those who cannot and EMBODY the Gospel of Jesus Christ by knowing profound desolation and abandonment in times of suffering. I MUST BECOME FOR OTHERS all those things which in this moment I feel have been denied to me.

13.) By so doing, GOD TRIUMPHS in my weakness and HIS LOVE will reach from Heaven to earth through me because He has honored me by allowing me to KNOW utter desolation. Can anyone understand desolation lest they've truly walked the path?
14.) By KNOWING utter desolation, God prepares me to help others in utter desolation.

15.) In the end, we will heal ourselves by healing one another.

CHAPTER FOUR

If these Suppositions are True, than how do we answer the question of suffering in the world?

1.) We answer that God is good and true - no matter what suffering we or any other may endure.

2.) God remains faithful even in desolation.

3.) He is the one light that never dims, the one heart that never stops loving, the one mind that never ceases to understand.

4.) God is the answer.

5.) No other answer can be sufficient.

CHAPTER FIVE
Epiphany!

1.) Desolation is the door!

2.) Desolation makes it possible for us to see God.

3.) God is present in all things, but it is in desolation that we become most able to find Him ourselves.

4.) Desolation is a gift!

5.) Desolation brings us back to our core of mortality.

6.) Desolation forces us to come down from all of our earthly delusions as we are reduced to dust.

7.) What can be humbler than dust?

8.) By becoming dust, our eyes may be suddenly opened and we are then able to SEE the face of our Beloved.

9.) And it is only then that we finally and truly KNOW love.

10.) I shall receive desolation with honor because it is known to bear great fruit.

CHAPTER SIX
Deliverance!

1.) My desolation has become my deliverance!

2.) How can I reject it?

3.) It has opened a door and I don't want to close it.

4.) It has given me understanding.

5.) I no longer need to be understood.

6.) It has given me . . . all I need by taking away everything I did not need.

7.) I stand face to face with my Lord and I know all has been ordained for my greater good.

8.) I KNOW HE is my true spouse.

9.) He provides for all that has been wanting.

10.) And I FEEL now, that He loves me profoundly and it has pained Him to see me suffer.

11.) But we stand in triumph together because our marriage has borne great fruit.

12.) Now, I must wait. For now, we are together silently because words are unnecessary.

CHAPTER SEVEN
Peace!

1.) And all is peace!

2.) My gracious and loving Lord, who has stood with me from the day of my birth and has never left me no matter how many others did, stands alone with me.

3.) I finally realize my past, present and future is with my beloved heavenly spouse.

4.) And although he chastises me when I need it, He NEVER leaves.

5.) In this moment, I realize that what I've been seeking has always been there.

6.) And He says, "Now, go. Help others to see this, too." For I know that My Lord loves all His children in this way.

7.) And then I understand the equation:

Desolation = Doorway = Emptiness = Heavenly Visitation = Translation of suffering into . . . MISSION!
8.) God allows us to experience desolation so that we completely feel, understand and know the needs of our brethren.

9.) By KNOWING this, we are then enabled to become a vessel of God's grace to our fellow suffering brethren.

10.) Some of us will be freed of our sufferings and given the opportunity to physically help our brethren with our

newfound understand of their needs.

11.) Some of us will not survive those sufferings and it is these who are even more BELOVED of God. Their offering of prayer and loving submission to His will, in concert with the offering of their daily pains, becomes a bouquet of flowers soaring to heaven on the incense cloud of prayer.

12.) And when we are able to realize that we love our heavenly spouse even more because He has taken everything meaningless away and allowed us to suffer for our good and the good of others, we can confidently approach the table of the heavenly banquet with our empty plate and know that it is full in the eyes of Our Lord.

13.) The Lord gives, the Lord takes away . . . . Blessed be the Name of the Lord.

14.) In my ecstasy, I find suffering to be preferred, because I now understand how my suffering pleases and assists my beloved.

15.) By offering my own suffering, and allowing my soul to be permanently etched with the knowledge that suffering affords, I allow my beloved to make my life a sacrifice to Him.

16.) I now plead with my Lord to simply allow me to become a sacrifice for Him. I do this because I love Him so deeply, that I wish to give Him anything and everything He could ask of me.

17.) I desire to bring all those who are lost back to Him.

I desire this profoundly.

18.) I desire it because I love Him with all of my heart, and I know He loves them with all of His.

19.) I want Him to have all of his beloved, and I'm willing to give him anything He asks so that it may be done.

20.) Then I realize: Love = Sacrifice

21.) I will give all to my beloved and continually plead that He makes my sufferings fruitful for all mankind . . . OR for one soul. It may be great or small, it doesn't matter.

22.) Religion = Rules, Ritual

23.) God = Love

24.) I CHOOSE YOU, GOD!

CHAPTER EIGHT
Embracing the Suffering!

I gladly walk through the door of desolation. I ***want*** to share your agony! I want to wipe the sweat off of your brow and give you consolation.

I know you are waiting. I've left you for a time, thinking that religion alone was the way to you. But in my misunderstanding, I lost Your presence because I sought worldly things, people and places.

Thank you for always letting me come back to you, my beloved God!

Religion is a PATH, it is NOT the TRUTH! The TRUTH IS YOU! I'd already had You, how foolish of me. Make me an instrument, my beloved Lord.

"Brothers and sisters: Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith to this grace in which we stand, and we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only that, but we even boast of our afflictions, knowing that affliction produces endurance, and endurance, proven character, and proven character, hope, and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us."

The New American Bible, New Testament, Romans: 5:1-5

Suffering and Sickness

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