

ST. PEREGRINE, THE CANCER SAINT

Suffering is a gift we can give to God. It is a gift that only the person who is suffering can give. When we understand its value and offer it for love of God and the good of others, then we also find that suffering brings joy

Certainly good works are of great value, but pains and trials borne with love and patience are worth even more. Love can transform even the smallest pain and make it a worthy act of adoration.

No one loves suffering for itself. But to suffer out of love, and in an attitude of acceptance and trust, is to follow Jesus.

St. Peregrine, the Cancer Saint, is an example of just such trust.

As a youth in Forli he took an active part in the anti-papalist politics of his town. Father Philip Benizi was sent to Forli by the Pope to act as a mediator, but he was insulted and mistreated by the townspeople. A group of young troublemakers, led by Peregrine, attacked Fr. Philip and drove him from the town. Peregrine himself struck the saintly priest on his face. Fr. Benizi's only reply was to offer the other cheek.

Peregrine could not forget the look in the holy priest's eyes—a look of compassion, love and pardon. Peregrine's whole life changed and took on a new meaning. He begged Fr. Philip's forgiveness, left aside his former way of life, and dedicated himself to prayer and solitude.

During this time he developed a trusting and childlike confidence in the Blessed Mother. On one occasion Mary spoke to him and urged him to join "her servants"—the Servites. Fr. Philip Benizi received Peregrine into the order.

After Peregrine had been ordained a priest, he asked to return to Forli to work among his own people. His favourite places were the hospitals, the prisons and the homes of the poor. He spent his days and nights visiting the sick and the dying, and comforting them by his presence, his words and his actions.

A life of poverty and penance eventually left its mark on the aging Fr. Peregrine. A painful and repulsive cancerous sore developed on his leg. Yet, he bore this suffering without complaint. To save his life, however, the doctors decided to amputate. Surgery was a great risk in those days. Peregrine was afraid and spent the night before the operation in prayer. Suddenly the figure on the crucifix above him began to move! Jesus came down and touched the painful sore, then disappeared. Father Peregrine thought it had been a dream—but he was cured! The doctors themselves testified that they could no longer detect any trace of the cancerous sore.

For this reason St. Peregrine has been designated the patron of all who suffer from any type of cancer.

The suffering that St. Peregrine bore in his lifetime became his crown of glory. His reward was the heaven that each of us longs to someday enjoy.

What we suffer in this life can never be compared to the glory, as yet unrevealed, which is waiting for us (cf. Rom 8:18).

Novena to St. Peregrine

O glorious wonder-worker, St. Peregrine, you answered the divine call with a ready spirit, forsaking all the comforts of a life of ease and all the empty honours of the world, to dedicate yourself to God in the Order of his most Holy Mother. You laboured courageously for the salvation of souls, meriting the title of "Apostle of Emilia." In union with Jesus Crucified, you patiently endured the most painful sufferings and so deserved to be healed miraculously from an incurable wound in your leg with a touch of his divine hand. Obtain for us, we pray, the grace to answer every call from God. Enkindle in our hearts a consuming zeal for the salvation of souls. Deliver us from the infirmities that so often afflict our weakened bodies. And obtain for us the grace of perfect resignation to the sufferings which our merciful God allows us to endure. So may we, imitating your virtues and tenderly loving our crucified Lord and his sorrowful Mother, merit glory everlasting in paradise. Amen.

Our Father Hail Mary, Glory

Prayer to St. Peregrine

O God, Who gave St. Peregrine an angel for his companion, the Mother of God for his Teacher, and Jesus for the Physician of his infirmity. Grant, we beg Thee through his merits, that on earth we may intensely love our holy angel, the Blessed Virgin, and our Saviour, and in heaven bless them forever. Grant that we may receive the favour we now ask...Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Say one Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory with the invocation: "St. Peregrine, pray for us"

Litany in Honour of St. Peregrine

Lord, have mercy on us.

Christ, have mercy on us.

Lord, have mercy on us.

Christ, hear us.

Christ, graciously hear us.

God, the Father of heaven, *have mercy on us.*

God the Son, Redeemer of the world, *have mercy on us.*

God, the Holy Spirit, *have mercy on us.*

Holy Trinity, one God, *have mercy on us.*

Holy Mary, Mother of God, *pray for us.*

Mother of Sorrows, *etc.*

Health of the sick,

Comforter of the afflicted,

Help of Christians,

St. Peregrine,

Converted by the prayers of St. Philip,

Afflicted with a cancerous growth,

Completely cured by the outstretched hand of Jesus Crucified,

Who performed many miracles in your lifetime,

Who multiplied food and drink

Who cured the sick by the power of the Name of Jesus,

Who converted hardened sinners by prayer and fasting,

Who receive every favour you ask of God

Most confident in prayer,

Most austere in penance,

Most patient in suffering,

Most humble in the holy priesthood,

Most zealous for souls

Most kind toward the afflicted,

Most devoted to the passion of Jesus and the sorrows of Mary,

Victim with Jesus and Mary for the salvation of souls,

Wonder-worker for the sick and diseased,

Hope of incurable cases,

Universal patron of all who suffer from cancer,

Beloved Patron of Spain,

Glory of the Order of the Servants of Mary,

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, *spare us, O Lord.*

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, *graciously hear us, O Lord.*

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, *have mercy on us.*

V. Pray for us, O glorious St. Peregrine,

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray

O God, be gracious and hear the prayers which we present to Thee in honour of St. Peregrine, Thy beloved servant. May we who do not rely on our own merits receive help in our needs through the intercession of him whose life was so pleasing to Thee, Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Preparation for a Sick Call

1.—A small table covered with a clean white cloth.

2.—On the table

(a) a Crucifix;

(b,) two candles;

(c) holy water, with a sprinkler;

(d) a small vessel with clean drinking water;

(e) a white linen cloth for the use of the sick person when receiving Holy Communion.

Prayers For the Sick

Almighty and everlasting God, the eternal salvation of those who believe in Thee, hear us on behalf of Thy servants who are sick, for whom we humbly beg the help of Thy mercy, so that, being restored to health, they may render thanks to Thee in Church. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Act of Resignation to the Will of God

My Father, I do not know what will happen to me today. I only know that nothing will happen to me that was not foreseen by Thee and directed to my greater good from all eternity This is enough for me.

I adore Thy holy eternal and unfathomable plans. I submit to them with all my heart for love of Thee. I offer a sacrifice of everything to Thee and unite my sacrifice to that of my divine Saviour.

In his name and through his infinite merits, I ask Thee for patience in my sufferings and perfect submission to Thee so that everything Thou will or permit to happen will be for Thy glory Amen.

Prayer for a Happy Death

Lord, my Creator and Redeemer, with all my heart I accept my death according to Thy will and in a spirit of adoration.

I want to die as a devout child of the Church and to go into eternity with the best dispositions of faith, of hope, of charity and of sorrow for my sins.

I hope to renew, at least mentally, my baptismal promises.

O Lord, I offer Thee all the circumstances, even the most painful, which will accompany my passage to eternity in reparation for my sins and to merit heaven better.

I call upon the great patrons of a good death: Jesus Crucified, with whom I want to pronounce the words: "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit;" our Mother Mary, so that she may "pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death"; and St. Joseph, that he may help me lead a holy life and merit a death similar to his.

O suffering Jesus, O sorrowful Mary, O St. Joseph, I ask Thee for these graces:

—A good life in faithful observance of the commandments and of all the duties of my state in life, which will assure me of a holy death.

—The gift to receive, in the event of a serious sickness, the sacraments of the Anointing of the Sick and Viaticum.

—Correspondence to the gifts I have received, so that my life may be spent for the glory of God, and I may gain eternal happiness.

—Daily prayer which is necessary for salvation; in particular the frequent reception of the sacraments of confession and the Holy Eucharist.

Jesus Master, I believe in Thee.

Jesus Master, I hope in Thee.

Jesus Master, I love Thee.

Jesus Master, I invoke Thy mercy.

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, I give Thee my heart and my soul.

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, assist me in my last agony.

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, may I breathe forth my soul in peace with Thee
