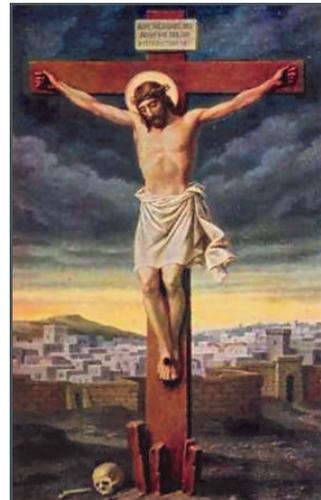


In spite of every difficulty, the Child of Mary holds on, absolutely and obstinately determined never to lose heart. Ever constant in his faith and unrelaxing in his efforts, he hopes for success, but his work goes on independently of it. When apparent failure comes, he fights on, undismayed, confident that, fortified by grace, he will eventually wear it down. He has a heart for the impossible, but his spirit is applied in all its fullness to even the smallest task. To each, he brings the same golden tenacity of purpose, standing by the cross until his work is consummated. He has been chosen as Mary's instrument and, though ever conscious of his utter unworthiness, he will not fail through any cause in his own power in the fulfilment of the trust reposed in him, no matter how long or drawn-out the battle, how hard the labors, how great the rebuffs, how hardened the cases, how hopeless the prospect. He knows that there simply does not exist on God's earth the person in whom his faith, trust and perseverance will produce no results. In the sinner, Christ is held captive, still being mocked and crucified; the King of Heaven is in possession of the enemy. The pursuit of such a soul must be unrelenting, even if the campaign lasts a life-time and the battle is the grimmest ever waged. White-hot faith must burn up everything natural which stands in the way of the salvation of that soul. Therefore, he never allows himself to be put off by false human reasoning. It is enough for him that God wants that vile disfigured soul so ardently that He has sent His only Son to die for it in fearful torment.

In our present state of fallen nature, it is impossible for us to love God truly and effectively without sacrificing ourselves for Him. That is a basic truth of the spiritual life and the Child of Mary fully recognizes its importance. From the outset, the member is told to keep ever before him the image of his

Crucified Lord Who devoted to him His last sigh and the last drop of His blood, and to remember that his own service must strive to reflect such utter giving of self. He is bidden to emulate St. Paul who met with **toil and weariness**, and was often **sleepless, hungry and thirsty**. His work will take him out in the bitter cold and blinding rain; it will bring him to evil places, alive with stinking vermin and repulsive with filth; it will bid him approach those from whom he may expect only sour looks, ridicule, insults, rebuffs, criticism and ingratitude; it will often involve suffering the pangs of failure and taking on the anxieties of others. There is little glamour in his true life, but his soul is trained to count suffering a joy.



Those who are nearest to Christ will usually have the biggest share in His Cross. Suffering must have its place in every fruitful life. Often, the Child of Mary feels himself thwarted, crossed, frustrated; At such times he remembers that he who will not walk with the Man of Sorrows has no part in His mission for souls. Likeness to Christ means complete conformity with Him, on Calvary as well as on Tabor. We cannot pick and choose in Christ. Mary became the channel of all Graces

because She accepted the whole Christ and all the anguish He brought with Him. So, it is with the Child of Mary. He knows that he is useful to God in proportion to his nearness to the Sacred Heart of Christ, from which he can draw deeply of the Precious Blood in order to bestow it on other souls.

Therefore, suffering is always a grace: it bestows healing, it confers power; united with that of Christ, it becomes priceless in its worth. The sense of suffering becomes the sense of Christ's close presence; the sorrows of life, especially those arising from the effort to make God known and loved, are a sign that the Precious Blood is being painfully forced through the chilled veins of the Mystical Body so that each member may receive It to the degree Christ wills for him.

**“No greater favor can His Majesty bestow on us than to give us a life such as was led by His beloved Son.”** Such was the belief of St. Terèse. The process of being molded to the likeness of Christ through suffering is never an intolerable burden. Mary's Children soon recognize that, because almost inevitably they are brought into close contact with Calvary in themselves or in others. This bearing of the Cross is in itself even more meritorious than their active works; it may well win more souls than vigils, disciplines or fasts.

In this Army of Mary, many souls who represent every stratum of society, are brought together in a great organization whose very life is to mirror the spirit of Mary to the world. Each member is bound in a unique way to all the other members; a principle of connection exists from each individual up through all grades of authority in the apostolate. The strength of the life of the movement depends on the strength of that connection, which, in its turn, depends on the loyalty of the members.

The Children of Mary are an army. What earthly army ever succeeded without rigorous discipline, heroism and sacrifice? Dare Mary's soldiers offer Her less? The soldiers of the world are often called upon to lay down their lives for their cause. That is not often demanded of Mary's soldiers, but they are expected to have at least complete readiness to offer their feelings, judgment, independence, pride and will to the wounds of contradiction and the death of a whole-hearted submission, when authority demands it.



## CAUSE OF OUR JOY

The Mother of God is the Cause of our Joy. Therefore, Her Army must be permeated by the spirit of joy. This is one reason it sets out to attract to its ranks bright, generous and enthusiastic youth. A unit which is not attracting them fails in its purpose. Moreover, just as the mission of Christ was always to give joy, even through the Cross, so is the mission of the Apostolate. It wishes to banish from the face of the earth the one thing which can stand between the heart of man and true joy, namely sin. The true knighthood of Mary is always characterized by the sweet charm of spiritual joyousness; he is happy to serve his Queen and follow Her, if She should demand it, even to Calvary. That spirit he radiates to all around him.