Suffering is a fact of life, yet most of us would do anything not to suffer. What follows is my reflection on encountering suffering in my work as a hospital chaplain.

The question is posed often, and with a deep sense of incredulity: “Why is God doing this to me?” The question is never rhetorical it seems to me. The patient is searching for an answer to his or her suffering. Instinctively, I want to answer that I do not believe God causes any of us to suffer. Yet I realize how little comfort this would bring and how unfair it would be to trump the question.

Over time, I have come to recognize the patient is experiencing a crisis of faith and a heightened sense of abandonment. The intensity of this faith crisis varies by patient and seems to occur more in persons who are very religious in their own tradition, whose experience of God has been one of conformity with that tradition.

Rosa was in her late fifties and an immigrant from South America. She grew up in a devout Catholic home and was taught never to be angry at God and never to question God either. I met Rosa when she was first diagnosed and remember her sharing how strong her faith had been throughout her life, believing that God would always see her through. She had felt invincible!

As her illness progressed and her health declined, she began to question God’s presence. Through tears, she would lament that she could not pray anymore to a God whose embrace she didn’t feel. Her anger started to manifest, and one day she told me that she was so angry that she wanted to punch someone. I told her that I was willing to be her punching bag, which made us both laugh.

She never actually punched me, of course, but this encounter facilitated a deepening of her trust in me and she began to express her anger and frustrations more concisely. She explained how she would like to say a “thing or two” to God. She was beginning to reconnect with the God whose embrace she did not feel, but whose presence she was now sensing in her suffering. This led to a more serene dialogue and a feeling of not being all alone. During her final weeks, Rosa regained a sense of peace at having reached a new level of intimacy with her feelings towards God.

I firmly believe that a merciful and loving God does not cause suffering. On the contrary, God is present throughout and even suffers with us, holding us when we cannot hold ourselves up. The late English poet Denise Levertov captures this image beautifully in her poem Suspended:

I had grasped God’s garment in the void  
But my hand slipped  
On the rich silk of it.  
The ‘everlasting arms’ my sister loved to remember  
Must have upheld my leaden weight  
From falling, even so,  
For though I claw at empty air and feel  
Nothing, no embrace,  
I have not plummeted.

Rosa discovered such a God in her questioning, in allowing herself to express her fears and anger to a God who is always intimately and lovingly with us.

No one will ever fully understand the mystery of suffering, and yet I believe we all have the God-given capacity to overcome or sublimate our sufferings through the grace of God that dwells within. Catholic writer Brian Doyle says it best in his book, Grace Notes:

“We think of grace arriving like an ambulance, a just-in-time delivery, an invisible divine cavalry cresting a hill of troubles, a bolt of jazz from the glittering horn of the creator, but maybe it lives in us and is activated by illness of the spirit. Maybe we’re loaded with grace. Maybe we’re stuffed with the stuff.”

For hospital chaplains like myself, being companions to our patients is a wonderful privilege and a great responsibility. Our training calls us to listen attentively – to our patients and to our own inner spiritual stirrings – knowing we can only be conduits of grace if we ourselves are open to finding it.

Jesus chose to suffer for us out of love. Let us joyfully receive His precious body and blood and be aware of His presence dwelling within us.

Carlos Cuartas
Chaplain, Memorial Sloan-Kettering and Lenox Hill Hospitals  
Parishioner, St. Ignatius Loyola Church
THIS WEEK AT A GLANCE

SUNDAY, JUNE 2nd
Sunday Social. 8:30 PM. Wallace Hall.
Hosted by the Ignatian Young Adults.
Follows the 7:30 PM Mass.
All young adults (ages 21-39) are welcome.

MONDAY, JUNE 3rd
Children's Choir Auditions. 3:30 – 5:30 PM.
Meeting Room. Details on page 3.

Ranger Rosary Ministry.
7:00 PM. Meeting Room.
Supplies and instructions are provided.
New members are welcome!

TUESDAY, JUNE 4th
Children's Choir Auditions. 3:30 – 4:30 PM.
Meeting Room. Details on page 3.

Ministers’ Night Annual Supper Social.
7:00 PM. Wallace Hall.
Details on page 5.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 5th
Society of St. Vincent de Paul Meeting.
7:00 PM. Conference Room.
All are welcome.

THURSDAY, JUNE 6th
Ignatian Volunteer Corps
Information Session. Noon.
Parish Lounge. Details on page 3.

Save the Dates: October 20th – November 2nd
Walk the last 100 kms of the Camino de Santiago in 8 days with Fr. Witt!

Walk from Sarria to Santiago de Compostela and be awarded the Camino stamp on your pilgrim's passport and a certificate signed by Pope Francis. Proceed by bus to Portugal and visit Porto, Lisbon, and Fatima.

Cost: $3,395 – includes round-trip airfare, all accommodations, all transfers, all breakfasts and dinners, daily Mass, and prayer materials.

Space is limited. For more information and reservations, please call 212-807-0484 or email angiecruzphd@gmail.com

Religious Education for Children

Registrations for the 2013-2014 IREP and Catechesis of the Good Shepherd programs can be made by calling the Parish House at 212-288-3588 and pressing “0” for the receptionist.

ST. IGNATIUS DAY NURSERY

INFORMATION NIGHT FOR PARISHIONERS
Wednesday, June 12th 6:00 – 7:00 PM
St. Ignatius Loyola Day Nursery
240 East 84th Street
(between Second and Third Avenues)

St. Ignatius Loyola Day Nursery will hold an Information Session for parishioners who are interested in applying for the 2014-2015 school year. The Nursery caters to children ages 2-5 years.

RSVP to: Ms. Cecile Iboleon at iboleonc@ignatiustain.org or (212) 734-6427

The Stewardship Appeal supports many important ministries and programs. Your gifts are allocated towards religious education programs, youth ministries, local charities, the education of seminarians, retired clergy, and all of the services provided by the Archdiocese.

Gifts can be made online at www.cardinalsappeal.org
Thank you for your generosity!

Don’t Be Alarmed…. The police car that has been parked in front of the church on weekends is not there in response to any threats received. Large houses of worship are being provided this visible sign of protection by local precincts.

PLEASE OPEN FOR PAGES 3 AND 4
On Sale at the Parish House!

10 Things Pope Francis Wants You to Know

Pope Francis has captured the hearts of the media and the people. Fascinated by his charisma and the many firsts of his papacy – first pope from the Americas, first Jesuit pope, and first to be named Francis – people are eager to know him personally.

In 10 Things Pope Francis Wants You to Know, John L. Allen, Jr., senior Vatican analyst for CNN, author, and senior correspondent for the National Catholic Reporter, writes with clarity about the Pope’s vision and values. Using recent and archived interviews with Pope Francis and those who know him, the author describes Pope Francis’ vision of leadership and evangelism, and his desire for the Church to be close to the people, especially the poor.

Cost: $3.00

Summer “Temps”

The Ministry of Hospitality invites you to Be A Temp. Choose a weekend in either July or August and volunteer to serve as an usher at the Mass of your choice. During these months many of our regular ministers are away and extra help is needed to fill their slots.

Please contact Adele Gallo at amdgallo@me.com if you can serve during July or August.

IYA Mass with Cardinal Dolan

Wednesday, June 5th at 7:00 PM

St. Patrick’s Cathedral

Young Adults from St. Ignatius Loyola Parish and other parishes across the diocese are invited to celebrate Mass with Cardinal Dolan at St. Patrick’s Cathedral on Wednesday, June 5th! Mass will be followed by a social at the atrium across the street. Families are also welcome!

For more information, consult the flyers in the narthex or contact the Ignatian Young Adults at IgnatianYoungAdults@gmail.com

Ignatian Volunteer Corps

Information Session

Thursday, June 6th

Noon – 1:00 PM

Parish Lounge

IVC is an organization of men and women who are retired from full-time work and want to use their talents to help others. Volunteers commit two days per week to working directly with those who are economically poor and marginalized or with organizations that address issues that affect the poor.

For more information, or to confirm your attendance, please contact IVC Regional Director Liz McMahon at 201-618-6924 or emcmahon@ivcusa.org
ANNOUNCED MASSES AND READINGS
FOR THE WEEK

Monday, June 3rd
(St. Charles Lwanga & comps.)
Tobit 1:3; 2:1a-8     Psalm 112     Mark 12:1-12
8:30   MEM    William Murtaugh
12:10   MEM    Miriam Wallach
5:30   MEM    Theresa & Frank Valente

Tuesday, June 4th
(9th Tuesday in Ordinary Time)
Tobit 2:9-14     Psalm 112     Mark 12:13-17
8:30   MEM    Anna Raccanelli
12:10   MEM    Willie O'Shaughnessy
5:30   MEM    Carmelina Mozino

Wednesday, June 5th
(St. Boniface)
Tobit 3:1-11a, 16-17a    Psalm 25   Mark 12:18-27
8:30   MEM    The Choix & Gordon Families
12:10   MEM    Mary Sullivan
5:30   MEM    Gilbert Alfonso

Thursday, June 6th
(St. Norbert)
Tobit 6:10-11; 7:1bcde, 9-17; 8:4-9a    Psalm 128
Mark 12:28-34
8:30   MEM    Lyle H. Pollard
12:10   MEM    The Meehan Family
5:30   MEM    Nora Terriberry

Friday, June 7th
(The Most Sacred Heart of Jesus)
Ezekiel 34:11-16     Psalm 23     Romans 5:5b-11
Luke 15:3-7
8:30   MEM    Kay Carolyn Calcagnini
12:10   MEM    Tom Hye
5:30   MEM    William Murtaugh

Saturday, June 8th
(Immaculate Heart of Mary)
8:30   MEM    Gabriela Legaspi

Sunday, June 9th
(10th Sunday in Ordinary Time)
1 Kings 17:17-24     Psalm 30
Galatians 1:11-19     Luke 7:11-17
The Parish Ministry Council cordially invites St. Ignatius Parishioners active in Ministry to the Ministers’ Night Annual Supper Social The Ignatian Way: Our Parish, Our Mission Tuesday, June 4th 7:00 PM – Wallace Hall RSVP by Sunday, June 2nd: 212-288-3588 or church@stignatiusloyola.org Please leave both your name and your ministry. We look forward to sharing a meal together!

Postcard Campaign for Habitat for Humanity-NYC after all Masses June 8th and 9th Each year we gather as a community of faith here in God’s house to lend our support to the efforts being made by our friends at Habitat For Humanity-NYC who work tirelessly to make the idea of affordable home ownership possible for many working families in our city.

Please join members of Ignatian Social Justice in the Narthex after all Masses on June 8th and 9th to sign a postcard to our legislators to advocate for affordable homeownership.

Saint Ignatius Loyola School invites the Parish to its Annual Street Fair, taking place on Friday, June 7th. 84th street will be closed to allow fair-goers to enjoy games, rides, and food – both on the street and in McKinnon Hall. Tickets can be purchased in McKinnon Hall upon arrival. It is a rain or shine event, so make plans to start next weekend with some family fun!

Throughout Lent, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul sponsored a weekly food drive at St. Ignatius. Over 100 boxes and bags of canned goods, cereal, rice, and pasta were donated to the Community Food Pantry at the Church of St. Gregory the Great. A letter of thanks from Msgr. Michael Crimmins, Pastor, was recently received by Father Witt.

Dear Father Witt,

It is with a sense of extreme gratitude that I am writing, once again, to you on behalf of our parishioners and neighbors to tell you how deeply moved we are by the tremendous generosity of your parish. They have truly outdone themselves!

Just this past Tuesday at our food pantry, we actually distributed the last of your donations of pasta to our patrons. We still have some rice and canned vegetables left and they will be given out at the next pantry. With the amount of food donated by your parishioners as well as from our own parishioners and school children, we have been able to satisfy the growing demands of our community in their need for food.

Please express our sincere gratitude to your parishioners for their partnership with us in our efforts to feed the poor and advise them that they will always be in our prayers.

Sincerely,
Msgr. Michael Crimmins Pastor
Music Information: (212) 288-2520   Email: music@stignatiusloyola.org