

**Carrying the Death of Jesus
(9th Sunday of Ordinary Time, Year B)**

2 Corinthians 4:6-11—Treasure in Earthen Vessels

1. Creation: God said “let there be light” (4:6; cf. Gen 1:3)
2. Earthen Vessels: “earthen vessels” or “jars of clay” (4:7)
 - a. Sacrificial vessels: used by priests (Lev 6:28)
 - b. Mortality: fragility of human life (Job 10:8-9)
3. Suffering: “always carrying in the body the dying (Greek *nekrōsis*) of Jesus” (4:10)
4. Life of Jesus: “manifested in our mortal flesh” (4:11)

The Living Tradition

St. John Paul II: The Redeemer suffered in place of man and for man. *Every man has his own share in the Redemption.* Each one is also called to share in that suffering through which the Redemption was accomplished. *He is called to share in that suffering through which all human suffering has also been redeemed. In bringing about the Redemption through suffering, Christ has also raised human suffering to the level of the Redemption. Thus each man, in his suffering, can also become a sharer in the redemptive suffering of Christ.* The texts of the New Testament express this concept in many places. In the Second Letter to the Corinthians the Apostle writes: “We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always *carrying in the body the death of Jesus*, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For while we live we are always being given up to death for Jesus’ sake, so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus” (2 Cor 4:8-11)... These sufferings enable the recipients of that Letter to share in the work of the Redemption, accomplished through the suffering and death of the Redeemer. (John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Salvifici Doloris* nos. 19-20)

Questions for Discussion and Reflection (9th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B)

1. What does it mean for Christians to “always” be “carrying about” in our bodies “the dying of Jesus”? How can we better live out this mystery in our daily lives?

For Further Reading

1. Pope John Paul II. Apostolic Letter on the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering, *Salvifici Doloris* (Feb 11, 1984).
2. Stegman, Thomas D., S.J. *Second Corinthians*. Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2009.
3. Aquinas, St. Thomas. *Commentary on the Letters of Saint Paul to the Corinthians*. Translated by F. R. Larcher, O.P., B. Mortensen, and D. Keating. Edited by J. Mortensen and E. Alarcón. Lander, WY: Aquinas Institute, 2012.
4. Bray, Gerald, ed. *1-2 Corinthians*. Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, New Testament VII. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1999.