

# **A Friendship Like No Other**

**Reflection by Dcn Andy**

St. Teresa of Avila was once thrown from her carriage into some mud. She is supposed to have said to God: if this is the way you treat your friends it's no wonder you have so few.

The story, if true shows that Teresa had a close relationship with God. She could speak easily and angrily to God, whether with a sense of humour or with the kind of petulance and self-centredness many of us exhibit at times.

God creates all human beings for friendship.

If that is the case, one could ask why so many bad things happen to God's friends even the ones who accept the invitation to friendship.

Why doesn't God intervene to stop people from committing evil? And how could God allow natural disasters and human evils that devastate so many lives.

The people who suffer these disasters and evils might well ask "what is the good of God's friendship if it does not save them from such horrors".

How can we come to terms with evil in a world created by a compassionate God who wants our friendship?

In creating human begins with free will and calling them into friendship, God becomes vulnerable to our weaknesses and fears.

So why doesn't God wipe out the evil-doers?

Jesus answer to this question comes in the parable of the weeds among the wheat.

Let both of them grow together until the harvest and at harvest time I will tell the reapers. Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn. Matthew 13:24-30

When we encounter God, we know that we are not God and that we exist only because God wants us to exist.

We don't have an answer of why there is so much evil and pain in this world. All we can do is encourage you to speak directly to God if you have questions about God's ways, as one friend to another, even if anger is the only emotion you can voice.

Even though we may know that God and God's ways are a mystery that only God can know, we still try to identity God's will in the workings of creation.

Suffering and evil remain a mystery that places us squarely before the question of who God is.

If God did not stop the crucifixion of Jesus, then perhaps God cannot change human hearts, unless those hearts agree to change.

God, of course wants to influence our hearts but God cannot coerce them to change.

"We can never know the mind of God. If we could, God would not be God".\*

What can we do when we are faced with the reality of pain and evil and cannot know why God allows them?

What turns pain into something ultimately positive is trust in God.

We find ourselves in situations that can only be endured with blind trust in the God we have met and come to believe in!

Life does throw us any number of curveballs, terrible things that are hard to handle, but if we want to find some measure of peace and blessing, we must say YES as Jesus did in the Garden of Gethsemane.

In the end, we don't need to understand evil: we just need to say "YES" to God.

\*Taken from the Book A FRIENDSHIP LIKE NO OTHER  
By: WILLIAM A. BARRY S.J.