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# The Teaching of John Paul II on the Christian Meaning of Suffering

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**Abstract**

Taking John Paul II's teaching on the Christian meaning of suffering as my main source for a Catholic perspective on suffering, I show how seriously he takes the reality of suffering, and how seriously he takes the question as to the meaning of suffering. I proceed to explore his many-sided teaching on the way in which sin is and is not involved in the meaning of suffering, giving particular attention to his teaching on social dimensions of sin and suffering that are little understood in the individualistic West today. The heart of his teaching on suffering lies in his explication of how it is that we have to be conformed in our suffering to the suffering of Christ so as to share in His resurrection. But it is not the suffering as such but the love that we are called to live when we suffer, that incorporates us into the risen Christ.

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