

"Suffering Is the Inner Side of Love"

The Pope's monthly intention for December is "that our experience of suffering may help us better understand the pain of the many people who are alone, sick, or aged, and stir us to generous help."

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Benedict XVI's prayer intention for the month of December is the following: *That our experience of suffering may help us better understand the pain of the many*

people who are alone, sick, or aged, and stir us to generous help.

This intention is found in his letter to the Apostleship of Prayer, a group that counts on the prayers of over 50 million people around the world.

As Benedict XVI has often insisted, it is only by suffering that we can learn to love others. "Suffering is the inner side of love," says the Pope. "It is important to learn how to suffer...the avoidance of suffering renders someone unfit to cope with life" (*Benedict XVI, God and the World*, Ignatius Press, 2002).

Following Christ's example, suffering has immense value in bringing the world to God. "Mysteriously united to Christ, the one who suffers with love and meek self-abandonment to the will of God becomes a living offering for the salvation of the world" (*Benedict XVI, 2008 Message for World Day of the Sick*).

Besides the general prayer intention for the month of December, the Pope also gives a missionary intention:

That all the poor of the world may open the door to Christ and his Gospel of peace, fraternity and justice.

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