

God's Magnanimous Providence

Saint Paul's words found in today's first reading from Romans are among the most well-known in the Bible: "For those who love God all things work together for good" (Rom 8:28). We need to read that verse frequently: **all things** (both good and bad, pleasant and difficult, including every person) can contribute to fulfilling God's loving plan for humanity.

It is interesting to note that this specific verse was chosen to be the "mission motto" of the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers. In short, this affirmation of Saint Paul provides a profound insight into the attitude of *all missionaries*—and of all Christians. In God's design **everything** we meet in life (no exceptions) can contribute to the unfolding of God's Kingdom. Because of our deep love of God, we are enabled to see God's hand in everything.

Christian mission is marvelously enhanced by this faith perspective. Often, many initiatives undertaken for evangelization do not meet with immediate success. Difficult challenges and apparent failures can open us up to a deeper relationship with Jesus and a more profound configuration to Christ. Our life—and mission itself—reflects this "paschal paradigm." In our daily lives, we struggle to move through darkness to light, through captivity to freedom, through suffering and brokenness to wholeness, from loneliness to communion, from sin to grace and new life.

We, as faith-filled Christians called to share Christ's mission, struggle to follow the path traced out for us by Christ in his paschal mystery. We reflect on the "divine reversal" that happens at Easter. What appeared as death's victory on Good Friday is reversed by Christ's triumph over the grave. In his paschal mystery Christ takes humanity's pride and sinfulness and changes them into opportunities for grace. Adam's sin that brought death is reversed by Christ's humble obedience—even unto death. Marvel at God's unfathomable love! This is "missionary faith"!