



When God Says No: The Mystery of Suffering and the Dynamics of Prayer

Daniel Lanhlan

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In many situations and throughout the ages, when people have petitioned God for the relief of their suffering, or the suffering of others, God has said "No."

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed that the "cup be taken from him," if it be God's will. God answered no. Three times St. Paul begged God to remove the "thorn from his side." Three times God said no. When, says Father Lanahan, my family prayed desperately for my brother Neil to be cured of melanoma, God said no. When we prayed for a twenty-five-year-old niece to survive a car accident, God said no. When the victims of war in the former Yugoslavia, or in any of the hundred places war is being waged at any given time prayed; when people afflicted with cancer, alcoholism, or AIDS prayed for deliverance; when the victims of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse prayed to be spared, the answer was "No."

This book is not another theological or philosophical attempt to provide a rational solution to the divine puzzle of why God allows innocent people to suffer or why our prayers in Jesus' name are not effective. This book attempts to provide simple, practical, pastoral insights for the ordinary person who comes to listen to the Word of God when we assemble as Church.

When God Says No ends in Heaven. Face to face with God, says Father Lanahan, we will not be given the answer to the question that no theology, no book, not even the Bible, no dogma, no authority, not even that of the Church, has ever answered: Why the suffering of the innocent? Instead, we will be blessed with the fullness of salvation and healing and made whole at last. We will be with the Answer in love forever.

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