

## Reflection Tuesday Week 6 – 2022

Listen to St James again *“All that is good, everything that is perfect, is given us from above; it comes down from the Father of all light; with him there is no such thing as alteration, no shadow of change. **By his own choice he made us his children** by the message of the truth so that we should be a first-fruits of all that he had created.”* Jm 12: 16-18.

A pagan concept, present in Judaism, that easily slipped into Christianity was the belief that God was a Puppet Master who plays around with our lives sending us challenges to see whether we are faithful or to prove our loyalty and our trust. In this understanding, we would be blessed in doing good and punished doing bad. James is completely opposed to this belief. God only gives us good he rightly says. This means that when things go against us or we suffer loss or tragedy, it is none of God's doing. And, as James rightly suggests, we must look elsewhere for why bad things happen to us.

Rabbi Kushner writes: *Maybe God does not cause our suffering. Maybe it happens for some reason other than the will of God. The psalmist writes, “I lift mine eyes to the hills; from where does my help come? My help comes from the Lord, maker of Heaven and earth.” (Ps 121:1–2) Could it be that God does not cause the bad things that happen to us? Could it be that He doesn't decide which families shall give birth to a handicapped child, that He did not single out one to be crippled by a bullet or another by a degenerative disease, but rather that He stands ready to help them and us cope with our tragedies if we could only get beyond the feelings of guilt and anger that separate us from God? Could it be that “How could God do this to me?” is really the wrong question for us to ask?*

**Painter to Gallery Owner:** *How are my paintings selling?*

**Gallery Owner:** *Well, there is some good news and some bad news. A man came in the other day and asked me if you were a painter whose work would become more valuable after your death. When I told him I thought you were, he bought everything you'd painted in the gallery.*

**Painter:** *Wow! That's terrific! What's the bad news?*

**Gallery Owner:** *He was your doctor*