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Pastor's Column

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“Prayer to Ask of God the Good Use of Sickness”

(In his latter years, the French philosopher, Blaise Pascal (1623-1662), suffered intense physical pain (authoritative speculation ranges from tuberculosis to a brain tumor). He composed a lengthy “Prayer to Ask of God the Good Use of Sickness” from whose 15th and final section come these words):

“Grant, O Lord, that, such as I am, I may conform myself to your will: That in the midst of suffering I may glorify you. Without those sufferings I cannot attain to your glory: And you yourself, who are my savior, had no desire to go to your Father by any way than this.

By the print of your nails, your disciples knew you; and by the marks of suffering, you will know who are your disciples. Make me your own by the pains I endure in my body, in my mind, by reason of the sins I have committed against you.

And since nothing is acceptable to God unless it is offered in your name, unite my will to yours, and my sufferings to those you underwent: May my sufferings be lost in yours. Unite me to yourself. Fill me with yourself and the Holy Spirit.

Come into my heart and soul that there you may bear for me my sufferings, that there you may in a measure make up whatever remains for you to suffer of your passion, that passion that you endured in all your members until the number of your elect shall be complete in the fullness of your mystical body; so that when my being is filled with you, it shall no longer be I that live and suffer, but you who live and suffer in me, O my Savior. Amen”

As sickness, disease, and the ailments that come with older age find their way into our lives, may we, in faith, pray the prayer of Blaise Pascal. May our sufferings be utilized in bringing us closer to God and preparing us for our final surrender.

F. Mike