

IN THE SCHOOL OF MARY AND THE CROSS
Written by Mother Adela, Foundress SCTJM



Distinctive mark of JP II: suffering

To enter deeper into the vision of the redeeming and formative power of human suffering, is fundamental for understanding the heart, the person and the life of John Paul II.

I am profoundly and humbly convinced that in the School of Mary and of the Cross, great witnesses of Love are formed and shaped....Since a young age, Karol Wojtyla was taken to this school. Since he was very young he lived great and piercing personal, familial, national, and worldwide sufferings... he felt it for the first time in an intense manner with the early death of his mother; then, while still young, with the death of his brother, the person closest to him; then, a short time afterwards, with the death of his father who had been crucial in his human and spiritual formation. In his youth, so many of his friends were murdered....his spiritual director, some brother seminarians...World War II....totalitarian systems (communism and Nazism) and oppressors of human freedom...where power and violence, poverty, oppression of freedom, concentration camps, cities of death, all were built around him...Karol Wojtyla was formed in the school where the Blessed Virgin forms souls particularly chosen to be more visible icons of Christ Crucified. This is the “**school of sacrifice and of suffering.**” (expression of Padre Pio). A school that formed him to become an austere, simple and with a sharp vision, sensitive to suffering, stripped of self and of human support and attachments, so in that way grow in total trust in God and in the Blessed Virgin Mary. How many times he had to witness violence and its heart-rending consequences. For example, this in reference to a co-worker during his clandestine seminary (this was the seminary life for the Pope): “*In order to avoid deportation to do forced labor in Germany, I began in the autumn of 1940 to work as a laborer in a stone quarry attached to the Solway chemical plant [close to where Saint Faustina lived]. I was present when, during the detonation of a dynamite charge, some rocks struck a worker and killed him. The experience left a profound impression on me: those rocks had a strong impact in my heart. They took his body, and walked in a silent line. Toil still lingered about him, a sense of wrong.*” (Gift and Mystery)

John Paul II is the first Pope who gives us a magisterial document on suffering.... I invite you to enter into the School of his Apostolic Letter, ***Salvifici Doloris***, on the Christian Sense of Human Suffering, given the 11th of February of 1984, Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes.