

Ask a Priest
July 20, 2021

Question: Sometimes it feels like no matter how you try to live your life - going to Mass, teaching your kids the right ways of the Church, just being a good person in general, etc - bad things always seem to happen whether it is personally, to a family member or your child, in your marriage, or just in every day circumstances. **My question is, why does God allow bad things to happen? Many times this has truly tested my faith and has made me wonder why even try to be a good person if bad things still happen?**

Answer:

Consider Fr Steve's June 29th 2021 homily [podcast](#).

In addition, this excerpt by Fr Kenneth Doyle (Catholic Commentator in Baton Rouge) <http://thecatholiccommentator.org/pages/?p=14901>

Moral evil, even, is easier to understand than natural disasters: St. Augustine, among others, argues that God allows our evil actions because to prevent them would undermine our freedom, and the benefit of free will outweighs all of its ill effects. But disasters, such as earthquakes and hurricanes, are more difficult to explain. Clearly we believe that God could control them if he wanted – in Chapter 4 of Mark's Gospel, after Jesus had calmed the waves, the apostles ask, "Who then is this whom even wind and sea obey?"

Catholic teaching would suggest that disharmony in nature is one of the consequences of original sin; this is the approach taken in No. 400 in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, which lists as one of the results of Adam's fall that "harmony with creation is broken; visible creation has become alien and hostile to man."

I prefer to think, though, that a full explanation eludes us. My natural reason tells me that God exists: The rising of the sun each morning convinces me that a master planner is in charge. That conviction is ratified by my faith in the risen Jesus, whose core message was about a Father in heaven who loves me and wants my happiness. On that solid basis, I'm content to deal for now with some ambiguity, like Job. (Job, remember, was beset by all manner of ill fortune, and when he demanded an explanation, God's reply was, "Where were you when I founded the earth?" (Jb 38:4).

The German Jesuit theologian Father Karl Rahner was right: The incomprehensibility of suffering is part of the incomprehensibility of God himself. If I could understand, at this point in my journey, everything about God, he really wouldn't be God at all."

OTHER REFERENCES:

- A great video from Father Mike Schmitz titled, "Why Does God Let Bad Things Happen" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0NOTU1g0Z8w>
- Peter Kreeft's God's Answer to Suffering <https://www.peterkreeft.com/topics/suffering.htm>
- Why do Bad Things Happen to Good People? (From the Denver Catholic) <https://denvercatholic.org/why-do-bad-things-happen-to-good-people/>