

Before the unjust death of a child

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In the event of death, we usually attempt to rationally explain its happening or to provide a sense of meaning for it through logical interpretations. We compose philosophies, preach theologies and after that, to fill in the gaps of what cannot be explained, we exorcise death with folkloric or religious rituals. For when one tries to deal with the death of a child using these means, all of these interpretations and exorcisms seem inadequate, if not senseless, especially when we use them to comfort the grieving parents.



According to Dostoevsky, it is dangerous, if not a crime, for one to use logic to explain or justify the torture or death of a child. In *Brothers Karamazov*, Ivan resists every attempt in using logic to explain death. He contends that as one cannot explain rationally why one loves a child, one cannot explain the torture or death of a child. When one uses reason to justify the death of a child, one can conclude that it is an act of God and even an act of the devil. For Dostoevsky, even if there is a rational or irrational explanation regarding human suffering, it remains to be painful, creating agony and fear, anger and infelicity, and it provokes an intense trial of faith which is not easily dealt with.

Even though Dostoevsky's stance may seem blasphemous and full of indignation, it is very Orthodox and very human. Christ refuted those that held to the idea that man needs to reconcile with and fully accept death as a natural order of being; with those who see death as a way of being liberated from the oppression of the flesh; with those that see death as a means of being freed from the trials of life, from this abominable world. "For God did not make death. Neither does He have pleasure over the destruction of the living. He created all things that they might exist, and the generations of the world so they might be preserved. For there was no poison of death in them, nor did Hades reign on the earth. For [God's] righteousness does not die» (Wisdom of Solomon 1: 13-15). Thus, when we make efforts to justify death, we do not accept this truth.

There is no room for words as we behold the death of a child. However, we should not remain speechless in regards to its injustice. In our deep grief, we need to mourn saying, "O my sweetest child, how needlessly do you die."; we should pray for the soul of the child that left us and, in humility exclaim: "I believe o Lord, help me in my unbelief" ... "I your servant pray, do not leave me alone, o Benefactor who is merciful."

Source: pastoralhealth-ep.com