

If you don't believe in life after death it's pretty foolish to live a Christian life, pretty foolish to receive Holy Communion, to pray. It's not worth it. But if you believe that this life is a warm up, that there is something far greater to come – then it's worth it.

There's a lot of suffering in life, lots of aches and pains, lots of betrayals and fierce disappointments. There is no other way. It's unavoidable.

But Jesus helps us understand, He encourages us, He explains. Jesus lives it. He suffers bitterly. Just this past week I was part of a group that is trying to face up to the reality of violence and racism in our community. There is so much suffering, so many crosses to bear.

Where is the silver lining, where is the joy? You and I have aches and pains, sickness, weakness, disappointments, misunderstandings.

Jesus had lots of joy in His Life. He had His wonderful mother Mary, His gentle, strong, loving foster father Joseph. He lived a peaceful, happy family life for 30 years and had lots of friends.

He communed with His heavenly Father in prayer for hours, day after day. He preached Good News – the Kingdom of God. He healed the blind, the deaf, the lame. But then came His disastrous betrayal. He was misunderstood, mocked, and maligned. He was tortured and whipped, crowned with thorns, hung on a cross and died.

But THEN, He rose, triumphed, returned to His Father filled with light, with joy.

We too, if we want to be with Jesus, must deny ourselves, take up our own cross and follow Jesus. Is it worth it? Is this the path you want to follow?

Well it is truly the road to glory. We lose our lives for Jesus sake and for the sake of the Gospel.

Where's the payoff??

Well, you know! Living in the presence of God, united with God, one with God.

Failure to take up our cross; reject our cross is separation.

Please teach your children this precious lesson!