Virtue of Hope
(From Conversation with God, Fernandez Carvajal)

The Gospel of today's Mass shows us, once again, how God is closer to those who need him most. He has come to cure, to forgive, to save, and not only to preserve those who are whole. He is the divine Physician, who cures above all the sicknesses of the soul. Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick, He says to those who criticise him for eating with Publicans and sinners. When the things of the soul are not going well, when they have lost their health - and we are never completely well - Jesus is ready to pour out more care, more help. He does not abandon the sick man, and He does not abandon us. He does not give anybody up for lost. He does not leave us alone with our defects, with those things we can and must improve, because He calls us to sanctity and he has the necessary graces ready for us. It is only the sick man who can cause the medicines, and the actions of the Physician who can cure all ills, to be ineffective by refusing to take them. The saving will of Christ for each one of his disciples - for us - is the pledge that we will reach what He himself asks of us.

The virtue of hope enables us to see that the difficulties of this life have a deeper meaning, they do not happen by chance, or by blind destiny, but because God wills them, or at least permits them, in order to bring forth greater good from those situations. They cause us to strengthen our trust in Him, to grow in the awareness of our divine filiation, to foster a greater detachment from our health and from earthly goods, to cleanse our hearts of intentions which are perhaps not altogether good, and to do penance for our sins and for those of all men

God tells each one of us that He prefers mercy to sacrifice, and if at some moment He allows pain and suffering to overwhelm us, it is because it is good for us, there is a far more lofty reason that we at times do not understand. It is for our own benefit, for that of our family, our friends, the whole Church. God wants a greater good, in just the same way as the mother who gives permission for an operation that will enable her child to become healthy again. It is at such moments that we have to believe with a faith which is strong and to re-awaken our hope, for it is only this virtue that will teach us to regard as a treasure what humanly presents itself to us as failure or perhaps as a great misfortune. These are the moments when we have to go close to the tabernacle and say slowly to Our Lord that we want everything that He wants. This is our great mistake, writes Saint Teresa, we do to the disposition of our Lord, who knows best what is for our good. Jesus, whatever you 'want', I love. Whatever You allow, I with your help, will accept as a great good, without laying down any limits or conditions. I will always thank you for everything, if you are close to me.