



Starting the journey a signal warns there are problems with the antifreeze of the car. Later, the right rearview mirror starts shaking dangerously. Then, slow traffic suffocates under a relentless sun.

Difficulties arise little by little, or in an avalanche.

We thought everything was going to be simple when we actually felt everything went uphill.

The illusion of reaching the goal, the desire to visit a family member or arrive on time to the medical appointment, keep us in tension and allow us to move forward. We want to overcome difficulties because we have a goal to achieve.

There are difficulties in the Christian life too. They appear in many ways and some can become suffocating like: temptations, laziness, pride and greed, longing for an easier life, etc.

Major difficulties arise with sin. A sin that turns us away from friendship with God and with our brothers and sisters. A sin that often leaves us with a bitter feeling of sorrow, or drives us toward discouragement.

These difficulties can be overcome by opening ourselves to God's grace. When we remember his mercy, when we hear the voice of the Holy Spirit, when we look at a crucifix, we have energies to overcome the test and get back on track.

A humble prayer, a well-made confession, and participating in the Eucharist allow us to lift our hearts to the Lord and move forward.

The goal of heaven deserves our best efforts, especially when especially insidious difficulties come. We can overcome them, because we know that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ (cf. Rom 8:31-39).

New difficulties appear, in the complex human world or on the horizon of the spirit. The time comes to face them, one by one, with strength, with hope, with the

certainty that enlightens the heart of every Christian: "*Encourage! I have overcome the world*" (Jn 16:33).