

[For the purpose of this exemplar the significant religious question is: What is the nature of suffering as understood in Catholicism and Buddhism.]

Catholics have faith in a good and loving Creator who has planned a creation that is also good and loving. Because of this belief, Catholics need to understand why there is suffering that happens to all people a lot and to some people all the time. Catholics believe that we have a free choice or will so can make choices that are sometimes not good ones and so lead to suffering. This belief was written by a Church Father called St Augustine and is supported in the New Testament. ①

Suffering is central to Buddhist teaching and followers of Buddhism focus on find out what suffering was in their life. The Buddha said, "Life is suffering." Buddhists are encouraged to find out what suffering is. Buddhists think the problem is that we want to hold on to things in life in our life and not let go of them. They believe this attitude leads to suffering and it staying with you. ②

Suffering is important for both traditions and both think suffering is real in the lives of people. They both think that people make choices that can cause suffering for them and others. ③

The difference is that for Catholicism creation is good because it is by God and so suffering is only because of choices made by people ④ while for Buddhists, it is not just about choices made but life in general is about suffering and the goal is to find release from the cycle of suffering. ⑤

Catholics believe that our personal suffering can be because of our own choices and that suffering in society can be because of a decision by a government. ④

Buddhists believe that if we follow the Eightfold Plan suffering can be eliminated. ⑤

Catholics do not believe in the Eightfold plan. ④