

February 15, 2024

Daily Reflections

Journeying through Lent



Center for Spiritual Development

TAKE UP YOUR CROSS

By Sr. Jane DeLisle, CSJ

An Excerpt from Today's Gospel

Then Jesus said to all, "If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. What profit is there for one to gain the whole world yet lose or forfeit himself?"

LUKE 9:23-25

Reflection

Taking up one's cross is not an appealing invitation. Yet, this is counsel that Jesus gives us today. Since I am newly in the Lenten spirit, I am attracted to the words of Jesus. Maybe the attraction is Jesus himself did take up his very big cross and give himself over completely for our sake. He lived fully the love he preached!

Seeking out crosses of my own choosing is not necessary since life itself seems

to provide personal crosses in just living each day. Crosses come in many shapes and descriptions. Try some of these on for size; you may have encountered them along life's journey:

Relational Conflicts

Physical Suffering

Emotional Distress

Spiritual Dis-ease

Psychological Disorder

Diminishment

Jesus never hid the cost of discipleship. Rather, he lived life with passion and fidelity to grace, and so must we. Life happens and crosses are a natural part of life. Sometimes "big sufferings" come our way that have the potential to teach us valuable life lessons. No matter if the cross or suffering or struggle is big or small, it is ours and we need God's abiding grace to cope, and accept, and -- by grace -- to embrace it. When struggle comes my way, I seem to wrestle with what is going on, try to understand and find the grace that guides my acceptance. It is okay to wrestle with the hardships of life from time to time, for it has potential to shape me for the good. Attitude makes a difference. Asking for the grace needed and seeking God's companioning presence helps.

Still, taking up our cross is never easy and means sacrifice, standing at the foot of the cross and giving all over to God. It's not half-hearted commitment; it is full surrender to God's terms of my life and discipleship. It's a choice to live out the truth that we are "crucified with Christ" (Galatians 2:20).



Photo by Sr. Jane DeLisle, CSJ

For Pondering

- What have been crosses in my life and how have I resisted, rejected, or embraced them?
- How do I engage in suffering? What is the pattern that enables me to eventually make peace with my crosses?
- Where is God in the mix of joy and sorrow or well-being and suffering?
- How have the crosses in my life shaped me?

For Prayer

*God of compassion and mercy,
I pray to you as I am desperate for help.
I need to know that you care about me now.
Renew me in your love and be my refuge from pain,
replacing my distress with peace,
and be my strength when I feel weak and find it hard to carry on.
Lord, help me see how my suffering can glorify You to others*

*by how I walk through it with Your peace.
I ask that You continue strengthening my trust in You
as I go through this situation.
In Jesus' name I pray.
Amen.*

(ADAPTED FROM WORD ON FIRE)

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