

August 9, 2024

# Daily Reflections



Center for Spiritual Development

## CHOOSE GOD!

By Sr. Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ

### Today's Gospel

*Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. What profit would there be for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? Or what can one give in exchange for his life?"*

*For the Son of Man will come with his angels in his Father's glory, and then he will repay each according to his conduct. Amen, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his Kingdom."*

**MATTHEW 16:24-28**

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## Reflection

As I read this gospel, my heart skipped a beat reading what Jesus is telling his

disciples – that means you and me, too: that our journey in faith demands choices and commitment to stay the course no matter the consequences.

What does it mean “to deny myself?” As I reflect on Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection, he often turned to prayer and asked his Father for guidance. He said, “If it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will” (Mt 26:36-39). Jesus continually said “yes” to what God was asking of him throughout his life and we can gain strength from his lived experiences.

This is what I’m taking from this passage today, as food for my own faith journey. All along, Jesus had to make choices, and each time he followed the path in obedience to his Father. You and I have choices every day that keep us on the path of discipleship or lead us down a path we travel at our own peril.

In terms of “take up your cross,” the emphasis is on “your” cross ... not someone else’s! At the same time, we are not alone on this journey. While we must bear our own crosses in life, we have one another, the Body of Christ, to accompany us on the Way. Never lose sight of this fundamental tenet of our faith: we are the Body of Christ.

### ***Choose God!***

O God who calls each of us by name, may our choices be ones that point to our faith and trust in you. Let us not shy away from the hard decisions that must be made; rather, let us embrace each one of them in faith, hope, and love.

O God, help each of us to “deny ourselves” to live more freely and fully in you. Let us set aside all that impedes our ability to respond “yes” to what you are asking of us at any moment in time.

O God, may we embrace the crosses of our lives. While we might not understand the reason or purpose of our crosses, may we gently let this go and know that you are with us each step of our journey.

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Illustration by Gerd Altmann

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### For Pondering

- Can you recall a time in your life when your choice was made in faith, rather than with a sure knowledge that it was the right choice for you? How was this experience for you and what did you learn from it?
- Is there someone in your life who needs accompaniment as they struggle with their cross? How might you let this person know that you are in solidarity and prayer with them?
- There are countless crosses we witness by simply looking at the news. Choose one where people are under the threat of death and all forms of violence. Spend some time in prayer lifting them up to the Lord.

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### For Prayer

*Creator God,  
we know you are near and always present in our lives.  
We pray for anyone who is experiencing separation from you.  
May they see the Light of your Being this day  
and return to full communion with you.*



*Amen.*

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