



February 21, 2020 – 6th Week of Ordinary Time, Year 2

Immediately after Jesus foretold his suffering and death for the first time, Peter pleaded with Jesus not to make heartbreaking statements like that. In response to Peter's comment, Jesus challenged his Apostles and would-be disciples by outlining three conditions for discipleship.

The triple conditions: 1) *Deny yourself.* 2) *Take up your cross.* 3) *Follow Me.*

- 1. Denying oneself:** It involves a) the eviction of self from the heart, cleansing it of all evil tendencies and addictions with the help of the Holy Spirit; b) Enthroned Jesus in one's heart as Lord and the dedicate oneself to Him; c) Surrender one's life to the enthroned God through the selfless and loving service done for others to give glory to God.
- 2. Take up your cross:** The Gospel of the Day is a presentation of the Message of the Cross, an invitation to follow the Crucified Christ and a challenge to faithfully carry the crosses of our life.

Jesus says, "Whoever wishes to come after me, must deny himself, take up his cross and follow Me!" (Mk 8:34). Our Blessed Lord loves to jolt static minds and the inert understandings. He doesn't promise cushy comforts. He demands Commitment to the Cross!

Those who choose Christianity as a Lifestyle, ought to be Losers of oneself and Be carriers of the Cross and then Follow Him! Christianity, as a Lifestyle, has the Cross as its Basic Rule and it demands Commitment! But the very mention of the word "Cross", sometimes puts people off: "Not again the Cross" "Enough of pain and suffering" "We go to Church to relax and be comforted; not simply to hear of the Passion & Anguish of the Suffering Jesus on the Cross; we

only prefer the Glorious & Victorious Christ" Stop being pessimistic with Sin & Repentance just be optimistic with Joy & Salvation!"

These are often, the "happening" buzz phrases and popular opinions even in our religious environs. We like to be Saved but we Fear the Cross of repentance of our Sins. We like to receive Blessings but we Fear the Cross of living an honest life. We like to live a peaceful life but we Fear the Cross of trusting in God's Providence. We like to be prosperous but we Fear the Cross of being generous and compassionate. We like to be called good but we Fear the Cross of being Faithful to the teachings of Christ. We like to have joy but we Fear the Cross of giving up attachments and belong totally to God.

Yes, We often, Fear the Cross but Christ – Crucified on the Cross – promises His Choicest Rewards to the ones, who dare to take up the Cross. They will find Life. They will be rewarded. They will find true joy and peace. Have we really accepted Christianity as our Lifestyle? Then let us Embrace the Cross.

One important element of Embracing the Cross is translating our faith into actual works of service. In the words of St James: "Faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead!" (Jas 2:17). This requires us to permit the Grace of God to work in us, by our constant response and consent to the Will of the Lord. This will surely make us encounter struggles and difficulties. But let's always trust in the Grace of the Lord to strengthen us.

3. Follow Me: It means following Jesus by obeying the word of God and adjusting one's life accordingly.

Let us pray:

Lord Jesus, Let me be courageous to go through the time of difficulty, knowing that You, the Lord, wish to play a beautiful melody throughout my life. Let me remain committed to the Your Cross and celebrate Christianity with conviction.

Jesus, I Trust In You