

Scripture – First Week of Lent

Mark 8:34-36

Jesus summoned the crowd with his disciples and said to them, “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 and that of the gospel will save it. What profit is there for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life?”

Reflection

The cross has been a key symbol of Christianity for so long that we have lost the impact of Jesus’ words on his disciples. In the first century, the cross was not a metaphor.

In the first century, the cross was the cruelest instrument of torture, perfected by the Romans to intimidate and oppress the peoples they had conquered. Within the memory of some of Jesus’ hearers, the Roman general Quinctilius Varus had crushed a Jewish revolt in Galilee, destroying the city of Sepphoris (four miles from Nazareth) and crucifying 2000 people along the roadways. The cross was something to be feared, and the Romans wanted it that way!

In contrast, Jesus invites his disciples to embrace the cross – to shoulder that which we are told is to be feared.

- What is most feared in the 21st century?
- Does the answer change depending in what continent you reside in?
- What most challenges Christians today to follow Jesus?
- How can I become more aware of the crosses of others in other places/

Prayer



El Greco: *The Savior*

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O Lord, as this Lenten season begins,
lead me to recognize when I am most challenged
in my desire to follow you.

Help me to proclaim the Good News
of the cross
in my community and in the world.

We adore you, O Christ and we bless you, because by
your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Amen.

The Cross that Gives Life, Love and Hope

"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life, I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Galatians 2:20

Content for this supplemental Lenten Study comes from the Archdiocese of Portland's Office of Life, Justice & Peace, USCCB and Parish Faith Formation Team

What We Believe:

Solidarity is action on behalf of the one human family, calling us to help overcome the divisions in our world. Solidarity binds the rich to the poor. It makes the free zealous for the cause of the oppressed. It drives the comfortable and secure to take risks for the victims of tyranny and war. It calls those who are strong to care for those who are weak and vulnerable across the spectrum of human life. It opens homes and hearts to those in flight from terror and to migrants whose daily toil supports affluent lifestyles. *Called to Global Solidarity, U.S Catholic Bishops, 1997*

Reflection:

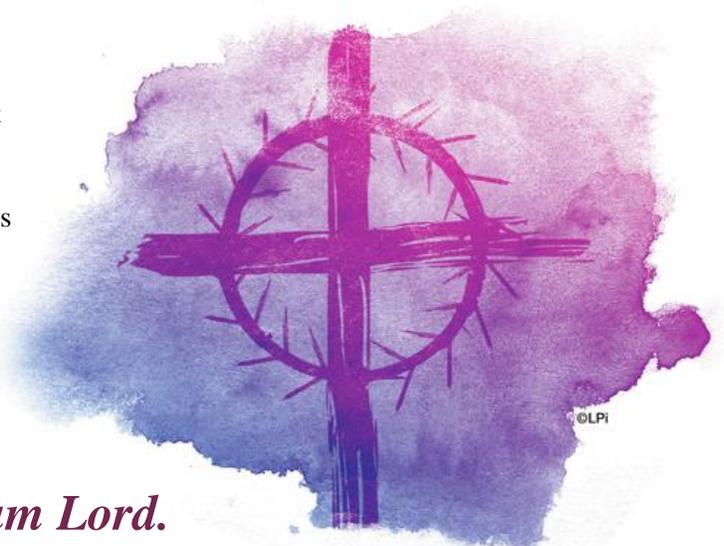
At the foot of the Cross, as we stand before our Savior, who in that sacrificial act is saving us through Love, we also stand in front of the people whose lives are being spent and sacrificed and needing to find hope in their dire situation. As we say with our human help to those who are in need, "here I am, you are not alone," we also say to the Lord, "At the foot of your Cross, here I am Lord."
(At the Foot of the Cross, Pia de Leon)

Question for Action:

Who are you standing with and standing for, at the foot of the Cross?

Suggested actions:

- Build relationships with people who may be different culturally, physically, spiritually and politically.
- Volunteer and engage in solidarity and justice actions of the Parish and/or the Archdiocese.
- Pray always for people who carry the cross of injustice and exploitation.



At the foot of the cross, here I am Lord.