

Living Your Faith Where Life Happens

Being a Christian is not just about what we believe on Sunday. It is about how we think, speak and act all through the week. Our faith is not meant to remain inside the walls of the church. It must follow us home, to work, to school, into our marriages, our friendships, our finances, our decisions, our struggles and even our moments of disappointment. In other words: we must live our faith where life happens. The world tells us to put ourselves first, to get even, to look for what we can gain and to avoid anything difficult. Jesus tells us something very different: put others first, forgive, ask what you can give and carry your cross and follow Him. That is why St. Paul says: “Do not conform yourself to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.” (Romans 12:2) That is why our faith needs to change the way we think. It is a move from asking “What do I want?” to “What does the Lord want?”, from choosing what is convenient to choosing what is faithful, from seeking what makes us happy to seeking what makes us holy. This weekend, Jesus gives us three conditions for following Him, and all three must be lived out where life happens.

The first is to deny yourself. It does not mean hating ourselves. It means recognizing that Jesus is worth more than our comfort, pride, preference and even our plans. It means Jesus taking the central stage in our lives. This is what self-denial looks like where life happens. It is the parent who gets up early to pray before the children wake up. It is the spouse who holds back a harsh word because peace in the home is more important than winning an argument. It is the person who gives up personal comfort to care for an elderly parent. It is the worker who refuses to cut corners even when nobody is watching. It is the Christian who says no to something everyone else considers normal because conscience says it is not right.

The second is to carry your cross. No real cross is easy. But it stops being just painful and starts becoming a blessing when we change our question from “Why is this happening to me?” to “What is God trying to teach me through this, and how can this help those around me?” Your cross might be a difficult child, an illness that won’t go away, a marriage that needs healing, or bills that keep you up at night. We join those everyday sufferings to Jesus’ suffering and offer them to the Father.

The third is to follow Christ where life actually happens. It can look foolish to follow someone who asks us to carry a cross every day. But as Venerable Archbishop Fulton Sheen said, “To be a fool for Christ is the greatest compliment the world can give.” The Catechism reminds us that there is no holiness without some sacrifice. We all prefer comfort to sacrifice and Easter Sunday without Good

Friday. But Jesus never promised a crossless life. He promised to walk with us through it.

St. Augustine said it beautifully: “Rough is the way which man has made for himself, but what Christ has trodden in His passage is worn smooth.” Whatever you are facing this week; rejection at work, misunderstanding at home, worry about your children. Jesus has been there, and He is in it with you.

Faithfulness will cost us something in real life. It is the businessman who turns down a dishonest deal and loses money. It is the young person who walks away when friends choose the wrong path, even if it means being laughed at. It is the spouse who chooses forgiveness when pride says to hold a grudge. These are our daily crosses. But we do not carry them alone. Jesus does not say, “Carry your cross by yourself.” He says, “Follow me.” Your cross is carried with Christ, for Christ and towards Christ.

As St. Catherine of Siena said, “If you are what you ought to be, you will set fire to all Italy, and not only yonder.” You don’t need to preach from a pulpit. Your faithful life at home, at work, at school — that is what sets the world on fire.