

Commentary on the Gospel for Fri, Feb 17th 2017

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."

Ash Wednesday is less than two weeks away. Today's gospel foreshadows what lies ahead as we navigate the season of Lent. So, I used this reading as a pre-Lenten preparation.

We all have challenges we face daily. I've watched too many loved ones bear some awful crosses of late. The young husband of a friend dies after a horrendous holiday accident, friends experiencing the devastating loss of a parent, too many receiving a diagnosis of advanced cancer, a child dealing with the pains of growing up people all around the globe fleeing for safety. Those are some big crosses.

We all have crosses to bear.

We tend to get upset about an awful lot of little things. There are relationships being damaged minute by minute over a social media post. Being stuck in traffic on the way to work, car trouble, a messed up order at a restaurant can all put one right over the edge. After I get upset over something, I find myself asking myself if it was really worth it. In the grand scheme of life, why did I let one of these inconveniences ruin my day—or sometimes several days?

Jesus tells us to get over ourselves. Don't let these little things get to us. Think of others. What could the server who messed up the order be dealing with? Perhaps she was trying to figure out how she was going to care for an ill parent, her children, and work two jobs without a reliable mode of transportation?

Take some quiet time to reflect on some of the crosses you are given daily. How big is the cross? Is it really significant in the bigger picture, or merely an annoyance? What kind of lesson may a cross help you learn? Pray on your crosses, pray for strength for others who have crosses to bear. Trust that you will get have what you need to carry your cross—all you have to do is ask Jesus.

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