

**12<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**June 20, 2010**  
**“Carrying our Crosses”**

In all of Scripture, in all of theology, and in all of spirituality, I have never found a more meaningful and helpful understanding of why bad things happen to good people than Jesus' words in today's Gospel: "If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross every day and follow Me." Deep down in our hearts and spirits, we all want to follow Jesus, because, in the end, He not only shows us the best ways to live life, but He also holds out the best reward for doing so, and that's heaven. But to do that following and get that prized reward, there are lots of very tough and painful experiences along the way. And these are the crosses that in one way or another, to one extent or another, we all bear as we journey through life. These are the misfortunes that more often than not we didn't do anything to deserve. They can be illnesses, major or minor. They can be discouragements, major or minor. They can be loss of a job, and big-time, long-time difficulty in finding a new one. They can be the collapse of a relationship, even a marriage. They can be parents losing a night's sleep caring for a sick child. They can be kids having a hard time growing up, and causing grief for themselves and their parents. Crosses can come in the form of the death of a loved one. Just the daily demands on us to be good to others can be daunting, and require much patience and tolerance. When we do shopping, lots of times we get opportunities to practice patience with a check-out clerk in training. It's a good time to say some prayers for whatever's going on in your life, when you are stuck in a line someplace. How about driving in heavy traffic? You're stuck; you didn't deserve it; so use the time to talk to the Good Lord.

See, carrying our crosses does not mean we have to slog through the streets with a big wooden beam on our back, as Jesus did. But it does mean we may have to do some things we do not like for the sake of others, especially those we love, all to make God's ways our ways. Even if the pain or illness is ours alone, and has nothing to do with anybody else, we can still bear the cross of it, offering it up as an acceptance of God's will for us, and applying that prayer to whatever intention we want, especially our loved ones. See, the more we care for others, the more human we become. We humans, by nature, have a compelling drive to connect with one another. So the more we give of ourselves, and the more we care for others, the more we can bond with those others, and the more fully human we will feel, even under the weight of our crosses. The important thing to remember is that in the 14 Stations-of-the-Cross, Jesus has shown us the way. It is up to us to follow Him.

Thank you, and God bless you!