

FROM THE PASTOR

My dear brothers and sisters,

Jesus speaks to us today about the Cross. This is not a popular part of the Gospel. No one likes to be told that we must suffer. It is an amazing thing in our culture that we think we can escape suffering. We see it all the time, that people will do anything to avoid suffering, anything to increase pleasure and reduce pain: from things like the abuse of drugs or alcohol to excessive shopping or entertainment. We look for ways to escape the problems of this life.

The big problem is that everybody has to suffer. In this broken world (broken by the sin of Adam and Eve), there is no way to escape suffering. We may delay it for a time, but another deeper suffering (for instance, loneliness) will fill our being.

If everyone has to suffer – Christian or non-Christian – why is Jesus’ telling us we must take up our cross Good News (Gospel)? Because when we take up our cross with Christ, when we choose to lean into our suffering *with Christ* (instead of trying to avoid it), we can find *meaning* in suffering, we can find NEW LIFE through the Cross! (For a great book on finding meaning in suffering, read Viktor E. Frankl’s *Man’s Search for Meaning*.) Instead of clinging to a life that will slip through our fingers, when we choose to cling to Christ on the Cross, we find our lives!

Bl. Mother Teresa of Calcutta spoke about recognizing that in our suffering we are getting close enough to Jesus for Him to kiss us. This union with Christ means *everything!* It is this union with Christ that will allow the suffering we have (because, again, we all will and do suffer) to be transformed! We will see life come from our death to self. We will see that, like the saints, we can find JOY even amidst the suffering in our lives.

This day may we allow Christ to “kiss us” and take up our crosses by allowing Jesus to transform our suffering into new life.