

**July 2, 2017**, 13<sup>th</sup> Sun. in Ord. Time, "How to Carry One's Cross," Mt. 10:37-42, by r.j. tusky

**"...whoever does not take up his cross and follow after me... is not worthy of me!"**

*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*

**Once upon a time**, even to the present, if we have lived very long, we have had to face setbacks, sufferings, &/or tragedy in our lives. We have experienced painful situations that we could not avoid or change. We have faced the painful decision of how to deal with "situations." Would we refuse to take up our cross or would we take it up, embrace it, and follow Christ? It is an immensely important question, the answer to which will determine if we become a bitter person, a saintly person, or simply, a lost person. It will be a stepping stone or a stumbling block, making us a bitter or a better person.

Victor Frankl, one of the great psychotherapists of our era, was a prisoner of the Nazis during World War II. He experienced, firsthand, the brutal climate in concentration camps, which turned some prisoners into animals and others... into saints.

He experienced, firsthand, the evil that turned some prisoners to despair & hatred and others to hope & love. He says the deciding factor between those who became animals and those who became saints...was FAITH! It was FAITH that their lives—and thus their suffering—had ultimate meaning. This FAITH put them in touch with a power that helped them maintain their humanity, even in the face of incredible inhumanity.

And this brings me back to the original, immensely important question:

'Would we refuse to take up our cross or would we take it up, embrace it, and follow Christ?' you ask. The answer is the same one Frankl gave: it is FAITH. (Allow me to try & explain this FAITH.)  
---For the Christian, **it is the faith** that, as Jesus brought new life into the world by taking up his cross & carrying it, so we bring new life to the world by taking up our cross and carrying it.  
---**It is the faith in God's word** to us in today's 2<sup>nd</sup> reading that, just as we were buried with Christ in baptism, so we will be raised to new life with him because of that same baptism.

---**It is faith in God's word** in the 1<sup>st</sup> Letter to Peter, which tells us:

**"Rejoice to the extent that you share in the sufferings of Christ, so that, when his glory is revealed, you may also rejoice exultantly."** 1 Pt. 4:13

---**It is faith in God's word** to the Romans, which tells us:

**"I consider the sufferings of the present time are as nothing compared to the glory that will be revealed for us."** Rm. 8:18

---**It is faith in God's word** to the Corinthians, which tell us:

**"What no one ever saw or heard, what no one ever thought possible, IS the very thing that God has prepared for those who love him."** 1 Cor. 2:9

---**It is faith in God's word** in the Book of Revelation, which tells us:

**"God himself... will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing of pain."** Rev. 21:3-4.

This is the Good News Jesus brings to us.

It's the same message Eleanor Roosevelt carried in her purse, with which I now close:

**"Our Father, who has a restlessness in our hearts & made us seekers after that which we can never fully find, keep us at tasks too hard for us, that we may be drawn to you for strength."**

May Almighty God, our Abba, bless you, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.