

How Do We Follow Christ?

Not too long ago I had a very interesting phone conversation with a person who was troubled with so much of what is going on in the world. This person was unhappy with the political situation in the United States, with the death of many through gun violence, had almost lost hope in the Church because of the sexual abuse crisis, and felt broken because of so many family crises. However, at one point during our conversation he said: “Father, if not for my faith I would have given up on life.”

My dear friends in Christ, faith makes a difference in the way life is viewed and in the way we understand the world. Some see the world as a dangerous place, but they walk through it using their faith as protection, some avoid as much engagement as possible, while others chose the eyes of faith and walk through life wholeheartedly.

Mother Teresa for example, used the compassionate eyes faith provided her, saw despair and loneliness in those on the margins and decided to do something. Her faith reminded her that every human being bears the same sacred truth: We are all created in the image and likeness of God. It is this sacred truth that is revered within everyone with respect and dignity. She gave heart in friendship to the people she served. She became their friend. For her, it was a cross worth carrying.

In today’s gospel, Jesus reminds us that “Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.” Only through the eyes of faith are we able to carry our crosses and follow Christ. Like Mother Teresa and everyone with faith, it makes a big difference in how they live and approach life.

Despite the crosses we bear, faith gives life a purpose. The purpose faith gives is to live life with magnanimous gratitude to God who made us, and to provide support to those who need assistance to live life to the fullest. For when faith-filled people reach out to serve their neighbor, it is an act of adoration to God the Father. The moment disciples show service to others in need, God is praised.

Jesus says: “I am with you always until the end of the ages.” Faith keeps God’s promise alive when we are burdened and overwhelmed by life’s crosses and our courage begins to waver. Faith supplies the trust that we need to remember that God is simply behind us waiting to assist. His presence will carry our crosses when it becomes too much to endure alone.

Faith is tested in times of trouble, but only by keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus, who carries his own cross and goes before us, can we overcome.

I invite you to reflect on these questions this week: How do you view the world in which you live? Is God easy to find in your worldview? When troubles test your faith, how do you move on?

May the Holy Spirit give us the grace and strength to follow Christ unreservedly.

-Fr. Anthony Ahamefule

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