

## **Taking up your cross**

“Take up your cross and follow me.” (Matthew 16:21-27)

Jesus never tells people to go “looking” for suffering. Life brings its own stress. Struggles are part of the arithmetic of living. No need to go searching for more. No second helpings, thank you.

And yet the good rabbi requires his students to engage the trials that come. The “cross” is a formidable teacher.

My good friend and neighbor, Andrew, has lost his job to Covid-19. Like so many others, he lives in a daily limbo, unsure if there will even be a market for his skills when “normal” returns. *If “normal” ever returns.* “This is the most disorienting experience of my life.”

And yet in losing his job, it is as if he has rediscovered life.

“For the last four months, together, my wife and kids, we actually eat dinner together every night. We talk together. We laugh together. We argue together. No more Tuesday night drive-thru at Taco Bell on the way to basketball practice! I’m learning that my kids are amazing. How could I have missed out on this?”

And, there are things I’ve realized I need to work on with Jess, my wife. The funny thing is that when you’re always busy there’s a ton of stuff that you can avoid.

Running, running, running is a great way of not dealing with what you need to deal with. Being constantly busy is a being distracted from what counts.

It's weird, but sometimes I even pray, whatever the future holds, that I won't lose what I've found."

When I listen to Andrew, I can't help but think that he has "taken up his cross" and is going where he needs to go. The mysterious workings of grace intersect our every cross.

All our "crosses" can teach and transform us, if we allow them to.

Every struggle is a window that can open our eyes to see what we couldn't see before.

Let's not close the window until we see everything we need to see.

*Fr. Steven Labaire*