

CROSS BEARERS

A Lord's Flock General Assembly Topic

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April 15, 2023

Salvation is God's gift to us to have eternal life in union with Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 6:23). The Catholic Church reminds us that the cross is the symbol of Christ's resurrection. Our Lord, Jesus Christ, conquered death by dying on the cross so that we may live. Jesus repeatedly preached to His apostles and to the crowd that He came on earth to mend and comfort broken hearts due to problems and hopelessness. Let us then "be still and know" that there is a God who never leaves us (Ps. 46:10). Moreover, He invited the apostles to be His disciples. Discipleship means to become more like Christ. Let us then be followers and disciples of Christ so that we could spread His teachings to everyone, no matter what the cost is.

A. Pertinent questions on how to be a follower of Christ:

1. What does it mean to be a follower of Christ?
2. What does it mean to be a disciple?
3. Does it mean God will make us prosperous when we become His disciples?

Henceforth, if we want to follow Jesus, we must forget ourself, take up our cross daily and follow Him persistently. For if we want to save our own life, we will lose it, but if we lose our life for His sake, we will save it (Lk. 9:23).

B. Requirements of Discipleship:

1. **Desire** is to walk with Jesus in inculcating our minds and hearts through His beliefs, teachings and passions with our sincere intention and action.
2. **Decide** is to make a firm choice to be a disciple regardless of the consequences.
3. **Count the cost of discipleship** is to be willing to renounce hindrances such as family, career, relationship, time and lifestyle that could block true discipleship with Christ (Lk. 23). Hence, to stick to our commitment is to serve.

4. **Deny ourself** is to forget old life's sinful ways so that we will no longer be slaves to sin (Rom. 6:6).

5. **Take up our cross.** We too have to carry our own crosses to share in Jesus' suffering when He carried the cross to Calvary. The various crosses are:

5.1 Customized cross. We cannot interchange our cross with one another, for each individual has a custom fit cross to carry according to one's ability.

5.2 Unexpected cross. Life is full of problems or unexpected crosses. Like our Elder-Founders, Sis. Techie & Bro. Bobby, they bear their heavy crosses and they have become victors.

5.3 Honorable cross – Carry our cross with a smile. "Rejoice as we share Christ's suffering (1 Pt. 4:13). Hence, to follow Christ is to commit to be like Christ and to acknowledge that He is our Lord, the Ruler/Controller of our life (Ps. 103:19).

Conclusion:

The call or invitation of Jesus to His apostles to follow Him, deny ourselves and take up our cross daily is also an invitation to all modern-day Christians. It challenges us to be true bearers of our crosses to engage in self-denial from worldly temptations, to die from our old self and to share the suffering of Christ in His Passion at Mt. Calvary. In this manner, we can safely say, we are true followers of Christ and we belong to the Crucified One. "I have complete confidence in the gospel: it is God's power for salvation to everyone who has faith" (Rom.1:16).

Reflection:

1. How many times did you fall when you felt the cross was too heavy for you?
2. Have you realized that you never carry your cross alone but Jesus carries it with you?

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