

DAY 2: The Holy Cross: Source of Strength

Opening prayer: "O glorious Holy Cross sign of our salvation, we adore You. Through you, O Lord Jesus Christ, the world has been redeemed. May our hearts cling to your cross with love and may we find strength, hope, and victory. Amen.

OPENING

Good day, everyone.

Today, let us take a moment to reflect on what it truly means to follow our Lord Jesus Christ. Following Jesus is not always an easy journey. It requires faith, humility, obedience, sacrifice, and the willingness to surrender our own desires to God's will.

The world often teaches us to pursue wealth, success, recognition, comfort, and everything that makes our earthly lives easier. **But Jesus teaches us something very different. He reminds us that gaining everything in this world means nothing if we lose our relationship with God and, ultimately, our eternal life.**

Jesus calls each one of us to deny ourselves, take up our cross every day, and follow Him. This does not mean that our lives will be free from suffering or difficulties. Rather, it means that we do not have to face those difficulties alone. When we carry our cross with Jesus, our suffering can become an opportunity to grow in faith, love, humility, forgiveness, and compassion.

Today, let us open our hearts and ask ourselves:

Are we truly following Jesus, or are we simply following our own desires?

Let us reflect on His sacrifice, His humility, and His great love for us, and allow His example to guide the way we live each day.

Scripture Reading Luke 9:23- 24 And he said to them all, "If you want to come with me, you must forget yourself, take up your cross every day and follow me. For if you want to save your own life, you will lose it, but if you lose your life for my sake, you will save it. "

Following Jesus: Carrying Our Cross and Living for God

Jesus said to all: "Whoever wants to follow Me must deny himself, take up his cross every day, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. What good is it for a person to gain the whole world, yet lose or forfeit his own life?"

Following the Lord Jesus Christ is not always easy. It requires us to deny ourselves, set aside our own desires, and surrender our lives to God. We are called to forget our selfish ambitions and follow the example of Jesus Christ, who willingly sacrificed Himself for us.

Surrendering to the Will of God

In Mark 14:36, Jesus prayed:

"Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me. Yet not what I will, but what You will." Jesus demonstrated complete humility and obedience to the Father.

Although He is divine, He humbled Himself and came from heaven to earth, living among us and sharing in our suffering. Through His life, suffering, and sacrifice, He showed us what it truly means to surrender to God's will.

If we want to follow Jesus, we must also learn to let go of our pride, arrogance, and self-centeredness. These are some of the reasons why people struggle to follow Christ. We must become humble like Jesus.

Many people find it difficult to follow Jesus because they do not want hardship or sacrifice. Instead, they choose to follow themselves and the ways of the world. They pursue money, wealth, fame, and worldly success, only to become spiritually poor and foolish in the sight of God.

Jesus Chose Humility and Sacrifice

2 Corinthians 8:9 says:

“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.”

Jesus willingly chose humility and poverty so that we might be spiritually enriched through Him. He gave His life so that we could receive salvation, healing, and eternal life.

The world teaches us to pursue earthly wealth and success. Many people spend their entire lives working and saving in order to become wealthy. They may become successful, famous, and respected on earth, but in the process, they may lose sight of God and their eternal life.

Some people become so consumed with worldly possessions that they no longer have time for God. They have no time to pray, no time to listen to the Word of God, and no time to participate in Holy Mass and no time to join Sunday fellowship – Healing Evangelization. As their relationship with God becomes weaker, they also become more vulnerable to temptation and trials.

They may become selfish and greedy. They may lose their kindness, deceive others, take what does not belong to them, and become unfaithful to God and to their fellow human beings. In pursuing temporary things, they risk losing what is eternal.

The things of this world eventually decay, break, disappear, and pass away. Therefore, we must never exchange our relationship with God for temporary wealth, fame, possessions, or worldly achievements.

Offering Our Lives to God

However, when we offer our lives to God, we learn to live for others. We do good, give our time to God, pray, worship, attend the church, and participate in Sunday fellowship and healing evangelization. Through our relationship with God, we become stronger in resisting evil and overcoming temptation.

We learn to forgive. We learn to love. We learn to do what is right even when we are hurting, struggling, or experiencing difficulties.

This is our true strength: carrying our cross together with the Lord Jesus Christ.

To carry our cross means to endure hardship while continuing to trust God. It means accepting sacrifices for the sake of becoming a blessing to others. It means offering our lives for the glory of God and for the good of our fellow human beings.

We are called to carry and embrace the difficult task of forgiving others, even when we have been hurt. Through forgiveness, we learn to give, to help, and to serve others with compassion and generosity.

Let us therefore choose God over the temporary things of this world. Let us humble ourselves, deny ourselves, carry our cross, and follow Jesus Christ each day.

May our lives become a blessing to everyone around us, and may everything we do bring glory to God.

CLOSING

As we come to the end of our reflection, let us remember that following Jesus is a daily decision. It is not only something we say with our lips, but something we demonstrate through the way we live.

When we choose humility instead of pride, forgiveness instead of hatred, generosity instead of greed, and love instead of selfishness, we are following the example of Christ.

Our crosses may sometimes feel heavy. We may experience pain, difficulties, disappointments, and sacrifices. But let us never forget that Jesus carried the cross before us.

He understands our suffering, and He walks with us through every trial.

Let us not allow the temporary things of this world—wealth, fame, possessions, or success—to take the place of God in our lives. These things will eventually pass away, but God's love and the promise of eternal life remain.

Therefore, let us willingly surrender our lives to God. Let us continue to pray, worship, serve, forgive, love, and do good even when it is difficult.

May we have the courage to deny ourselves, the strength to carry our cross, and the faith to continue following Jesus every day.

May our lives become a blessing to others, and may everything we do bring honor and glory to our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

All with gratitude and love, God bless!

Reflections by : Sis. Annalyn R. Bondoc

Head Servant / Preacher / Author

Ang Salita Ng Diyos – Nagpapagaling, Nagbibigay Buhay, Catholic Charismatic Healing Ministry Inc. or The Word of God Nourishes and Heals Our Soul, Body and Life Giving Catholic Charismatic Healing Ministry Inc.

Day 3- The Cross: Victory Over Sin

Colossians 2:13-14

When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross.

Because of the suffering of our Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross and His willingness to offer His life, even unto death on the Cross, Jesus Christ conquered the greatest and most terrible enemy of humanity: death. On the third day, our Lord Jesus Christ rose again from the dead.

1 Corinthians 15:3–4

“For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.”

Matthew 16:21

“From that time on, Jesus began to explain to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests, and the teachers of the law. He would be killed, and on the third day He would be raised to life.”

- **This means that sin brings death, but when a person sincerely repents, turns back to our Lord Jesus Christ, and lives a transformed life, that person receives salvation and eternal life.**

We must understand that poverty, failure, or the lack of money and material possessions are not what ultimately destroy life or not a failure. Rather, pride, arrogance, self-centeredness, and disobedience to God can lead a person away from God. Therefore, the greatest failure is if we cannot obey the will of God, if we cannot love God with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our soul and strength, if we cannot serve God and cannot do good deeds that is a failure.

Because, disobedience to God or Sin separates us from God, and the ultimate prize of sin is death. When a person turns away from God and follows evil, sin brings spiritual death. So, we have to repent, turn away from sin, return to God, and change one's life in order to be saved and have eternal life.

Redeemed Through Jesus Christ

We have been redeemed by our Lord Jesus Christ through His life, His blood, and His sacrifice. Therefore, let us choose Jesus Christ and faithfully follow Him.

Jesus said:

“I am the way and the truth and the life.”

We must follow Jesus on the way of truth. True blessedness comes from listening to the Word of God and putting it into practice. We are blessed when we allow God to reign in our hearts and lives.

When a person continues to live in sin, that person becomes a slave to sin. This is why we must accept Jesus, who is the Truth, so that we may experience true freedom.

The truth may sometimes be difficult or painful to accept, but the truth of God has the power to set us free. Through Jesus, we can walk on the path of truth, salvation, and life.

Examples of Living According to God's Word

1. God calls us to forgive.

We must listen to and follow the Word and teachings of God so that we may be freed from the bondage of anger and resentment.

When we forgive, we attain true healing and experience genuine peace and joy in our hearts. Being free to love and forgive makes our lives lighter, we received true happiness and peace in our hearts.

2. We are called to live according to God's standards of holiness. Leviticus 20:13 ¹³“If a man has sexual relations with a man as one does with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They are to be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads.

- **God's Word teaches us to live a life of purity, self-control, and holiness. Although obeying God's commands may sometimes require sacrifice and self-denial, choosing obedience helps us turn away from sin and remain faithful to Him.**

We must be willing to endure difficulties and resist temptation rather than deliberately choosing to sin. When we surrender our lives to God and seek to live according to His Word, He guides and strengthens us and protect us from harm.

3. Marriage should be honored. Mark 10:9-11 ⁹Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”¹⁰When they were in the house again, the disciples asked Jesus about this. ¹¹He answered, “Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her.

What God has joined together should not be separated. Marriage is a sacred covenant, and we are called to honor the commitment made before God rather than treat marriage lightly.

4. We should use our wealth to bless others.

God calls us to use our possessions and resources wisely, including using them to build relationships and help others. Earthly wealth is temporary, but acts of love, generosity, and kindness have eternal significance.

Giving and Helping Those in Need

Helping the poor and those in need can be compared to lending to the Lord, because God sees every act of kindness and generosity. Even when the person we help cannot repay us, God sees our hearts and our willingness to give.

Therefore, it is more important to give, help others, and practice generosity than to selfishly accumulate wealth or gain possessions through dishonest means.

Rather than allowing money and possessions to control our lives, we should use what God has entrusted to us to bless others. We should pray, serve God, help those who are struggling, and live with integrity.

A person who chooses righteousness, generosity, compassion, and obedience to God is walking in the way of life. But a person who deliberately chooses sin ultimately harms himself or herself by turning away from the One who gives life.

Conclusion:

The Cross reminds us that Jesus Christ has already won the victory over sin and death. His suffering was not meaningless, and His death was not the end. He rose again on the third day, giving us hope of salvation and eternal life.

Therefore, let us turn away from sin and return wholeheartedly to God. Let us choose Jesus Christ, walk in His truth, obey His Word, forgive others, help those in need, and live lives that reflect His love.

May we never exchange our relationship with God for temporary wealth, possessions, pleasure, or worldly success. Instead, let us use our lives and everything God has entrusted to us to glorify Him and become a blessing to others.

The Cross is our victory because through Jesus Christ, sin and death do not have the final word. Jesus Christ has the victory.

Let us therefore continue to walk with Him in truth, faith, love, holiness, and obedience, trusting Him to lead us toward salvation and eternal life.

- **As we come to the end of this message, let us remember the true meaning of the Cross. The Cross is not a symbol of defeat; it is a symbol of victory, salvation, forgiveness, and God's immeasurable love for humanity.**
- **Jesus Christ willingly suffered and gave His life for us. He carried our sins upon the Cross and conquered death through His resurrection. What appeared to be a moment of suffering became the greatest victory. Through Christ, we are given the opportunity to be forgiven, restored, and reconciled with God.**
- **Therefore, let us not take the sacrifice of Jesus for granted. If we have sinned, let us sincerely repent, turn away from sin,**

and return to God. Let us allow Jesus to change our hearts and our lives.

- Following Christ means choosing the truth even when it is difficult, choosing forgiveness when we have been hurt, choosing love instead of hatred, choosing generosity instead of greed, and choosing obedience to God instead of following our own desires.
- Let us remember that the things of this world are temporary. Wealth, possessions, fame, and success will eventually pass away. But the life we receive through Jesus Christ is eternal.
- The Cross reminds us that sin does not have the final victory—Jesus does. Death does not have the final victory—Jesus does. Darkness does not have the final victory—Jesus does.
- So, let us choose Jesus every day.
- Let us carry our cross with faith, walk in the truth, obey God's Word, forgive others, help those in need, and live our lives in a way that brings glory to God.
- May we never forget what Jesus has done for us. May His sacrifice inspire us to live holy and faithful lives, and may our lives become a blessing to others.
- The Cross is our reminder that God's love is greater than our sin, His grace is greater than our failures, and His power is greater than death.
- Let us place our lives completely in the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ and continue walking with Him on the path of truth, salvation, and eternal life.

To God be all the glory, now and forever. Amen.

Reflections by : Sis. Annalyn R. Bondoc

Head Servant / Preacher / Author

Ang Salita Ng Diyos – Nagpapagaling, Nagbibigay Buhay, Catholic Charismatic Healing Ministry Inc. or The Word of God Nourishes and Heals Our Soul, Body and Life Giving Catholic Charismatic Healing Ministry Inc.