

Encountering the Word

with Jeff Cavins

Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)

2 Kings 4:8–11, 14–16a • Romans 6:3–4, 8–11 • Matthew 10:37–42



Carrying Our Cross

The Gospel today presents one of the most challenging truths of discipleship, and Jesus does not soften his words. To follow him means to love him above every other relationship, even our own families, and to take up our cross daily. He tells us plainly that those who cling to their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for his sake will find it. These words cut against the grain of a culture that prizes comfort, control, and self-preservation.



The Resurrection of Jesus Christ (Kinnaird Resurrection)
by Raphael

St. John Paul II once said that it is only when we give our lives away that we discover who we truly are. This paradox lies at the heart of Christian discipleship. To walk with Jesus is not simply to admire him from the hillside as he teaches, nor only to receive the benefits of his mercy and healing. It is to enter fully into his mission, sharing in his intercession, his service, and even his sufferings.

St. Paul affirms this, writing that in Baptism we are united to Christ's death and resurrection. To be buried with him in Baptism means that our old self dies, and in dying, we rise to new life in him. Paul especially speaks of filling up in his own body what is lacking in Christ's afflictions. This does not mean that Christ's

sacrifice was incomplete. Rather, according to St. Augustine, what is lacking is the sufferings of the Mystical Body of Christ, the Church. Put another way, St. John Paul II said that Christ has made room for us to participate in his redemptive work so that we know what love is. By uniting our daily sufferings, inconveniences, and sacrifices to his Cross, we learn what true love costs and what true love gives.

To be Christian, then, is not only to receive but also to give. It is to live in such a way that every hardship, endured in faith, becomes a participation in Christ's saving work. In this surrender we paradoxically discover real freedom and real life.

Living the Gospel

This week, identify one concrete burden or inconvenience that you face and consciously unite it to Christ's Cross in prayer. Offer it during Mass as a gift of love. In doing so, you not only draw closer to Jesus but also participate in his redemptive work for the sake of the Church and the world.

Dive Deeper

Scan this code to watch:



Or go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gk7Tyea0iVw>

Ponder and Pray

» Jesus says that anyone who loves father, mother, son, or daughter more than him is not worthy of him. How do your closest relationships reflect your ultimate love for Christ? Where might he be asking you to reorder your attachments?

» Think of the daily crosses you carry. These may be illness, disappointment, financial strain, relational struggles, or something else. How might offering these intentionally with Christ at Mass transform them into a source of grace for others?

» Jesus promises that losing our life for his sake will lead to finding it. In what concrete ways might he be calling you to “lose” your life so that you may discover his abundant life?

Make It Your Own

You and others in your household may use this space to write anything about today’s Mass. It might be your view of Jeff Cavins’s reflection, your priest’s homily, or your answers to the questions on this page—anything to help you and your household get the most of today’s Mass.

“ **Whoever does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. ... Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.** ”
—Matthew 10:38–39