

FAMILY GOSPEL LESSON

Mark 8:34-9:1

This Sunday is the halfway point in Lent. Midway on our journey to Holy Week and Pascha, many of us are tiring of our spiritual disciplines. What we approached with joy the first week has now turned into a chore. We become aware how little love we have in our hearts, which can be very discouraging. For this reason, the Church uses this Sunday to direct our attention to the Cross. The Cross is our strength and our salvation. We look to it and pray to Christ to give us strength to complete this journey.

The Gospel passage for this Sunday challenges us again to commit our whole lives to Christ. As Christ was crucified for our salvation, we are called to take up our meager cross and follow Christ by crucifying our sinful desires and surrendering our will to His.



For Consideration

- What is our cross? How do we deny ourselves? What crosses are we to pick up to follow Christ?
- How can we gain the whole world and lose our soul?
- What does this Gospel passage mean for our lives?

TO DO TOGETHER

Decorated Cross

On this Sunday, the priest places a cross standing upright on a tray surrounded by flowers. Do the same in your home so that it can be a source of strength as you complete the fast. If you don't have a large cross, make one out of play-dough or cardboard. You can place it in Styrofoam to help it stand on a tray. Decorate the tray with flowers from church received on this Sunday or make your own flowers with tissue paper. Place it in a prominent place in your house.

Cross Find

Take a Bible with a concordance and look up the word "cross". Have each family member find a passage about the cross. If your children are very young, pair them up with an older child or adult. After they find a passage, have them draw a picture to represent it.

Lenten Review

Take some time to review your Lenten progress as a family. Look to the remaining weeks and decide if there are other things that you need to do to prepare for the Resurrection of our Lord. Your parish priest can help your family continue on this journey, so do not hesitate to consult with him.

CLOSING PRAYER

Glory to the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit both now and forever. Amen

Shine, Cross of the Lord, shine with the light of your grace upon the hearts of those who honor you. With love inspired by God, we embrace you, O desire of all the world. Through your our tears of sorrow have been wiped away; we have been delivered from the snares of death and have passed over to unending joy. Show us the glory of your beauty and grant to us, your servant, the reward of our abstinence, for we entreat with faith your rich protection and great mercy.

—From the Vespers of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross

FINAL THOUGHT

The young man was at the end of his rope. Seeing no way out, he dropped to his knees in prayer. "Lord, I can't go on," he said, "My cross is too heavy to bear." The Lord replied, "My son, if you cannot bear its weight, just place your cross inside this room. Then open another door and pick out any cross you wish." The man was filled with relief. "Thank you, Lord," he sighed, and did as he was told. As he looked around the room, he saw many different crosses, some so large the tops were not visible. Then he spotted a tiny cross leaning against a wall. "I'd like that one, Lord," he whispered. And the Lord replied, "My son, that's the cross you came in with."

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