

August 11, 2023



Center for Spiritual Development

Daily Reflections

JOURNEYING THROUGH CHALLENGING TIMES

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TAKE UP YOUR CROSS

By Sr. Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ

Excerpts From Today's Reading and Gospel

This is why you must now know, and fix in your heart, that the Lord is God in the heavens above and on earth below, and that there is no other.

DEUTERONOMY 4:39

Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me."

MATTHEW 16:24

Reflection

This scripture rolls off the tongue quite easily; yet the words and meaning are powerful and present each of us with difficult choices throughout our lives. To deny ourselves and pick up our cross means we are willing to take all that

comes with being Christian. Jesus, having been nailed to the cross, understands these words more than we will ever know. To pick up our cross as one of his followers means that we are willing to suffer for our faith and give ourselves solely to God. This necessitates discernment in how we are being called at any given moment in our lives. It means that we are ready to follow the Spirit's promptings even if it means losing some of what we hold dear in our lives. The commitment of our faith calls each of us to sacrifice for the greater good of humanity and creation by walking whatever path God wants us to follow. The echoes of different parts of scripture remind us that while we might not see our reward during our earthly existence, we know our reward will be with God in eternity.



Take Up Your Cross

Pick it up, O disciple on the way - the cross you are to carry - pick it up!
It is your choice to walk this path that Jesus tread so many years ago.

At times your cross may be heavy – seemingly too heavy to bear.
In these moments of indecision, dig deep and recall why you chose to give yourself to God.

Call upon the One whom you follow and who walks with you each day.
Remember, you do not walk alone as we are all pilgrims along the way.

Grant us the courage and perseverance to tread this path we've chosen,
resisting any urge we might have to put down the cross we said "yes" to carrying.

For Pondering

- Ponder what it means to you to "deny yourself" in order to live in Christ Jesus.
 - Our choice to follow Jesus flows from a heart open to be transformed.
How are you being transformed by being a follower of Jesus and embracing all that comes with "picking up your cross"?
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For Prayer

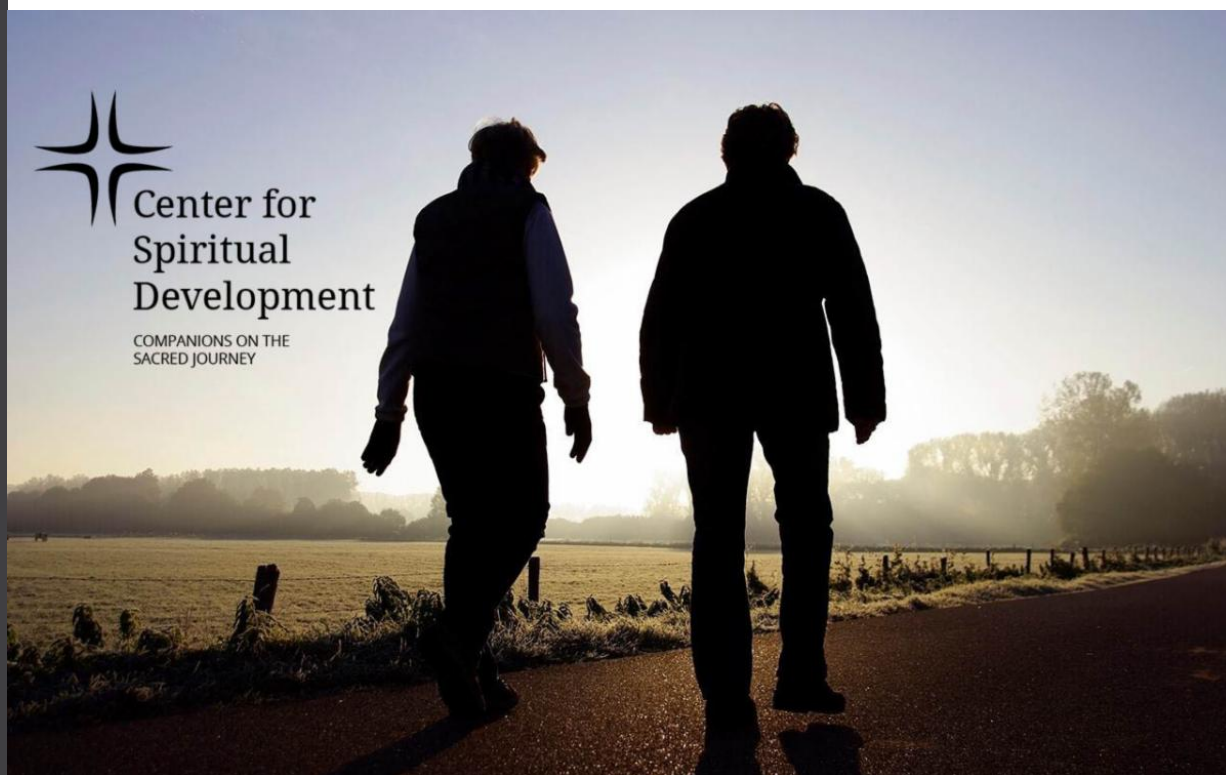
*We pray for the grace to remain steadfast in our life as followers of
Jesus.*

*As we walk this journey of faith, may we encourage and support one
another along the way.*

Amen.

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Center for Spiritual Development | 434 A South Batavia Street, Orange, CA 92868 (714) 744-3175

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