

SEPTEMBER 12, 2021
SIXTEENTH SUNDAY
AFTER PENTECOST



Jesus asks us to pick up our own cross.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	Mark 8:27-38	Taking up the cross
Monday	Isaiah 50:4-9a	God's servant must suffer
Tuesday	James 3:1-12	Controlling the tongue
Wednesday	1 Peter 2:18-25	The example of Christ's suffering
Thursday	Hebrews 12:1-11	The example of Jesus
Friday	Philippians 2:1-11	Imitating Christ's humility
Saturday	Psalms 116:1-9	A prayer of thanksgiving
Sunday	Mark 9:30-37	The servant of all is the greatest

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

[Jesus] called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me." Mark 8:34 (NRSV)

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Almighty God, help us to turn away from our self-centeredness and receive your life-giving power through the cross of Christ. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Dear God, in mercy and kindness you feed us. Give us strength and goodwill to show mercy and kindness to others. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the God of generosity give you rest and peace. (Psalm 116:7)



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HYMN OF THE WEEK

*Lord Jesus, You Shall
Be My Song*



WEEKLY MILESTONES

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- Tell or think about a time when you or someone else was being selfish.
- What happens when someone places their own needs before the needs of others?
- Jesus says that denying your own interests out of love is the way to find real life and joy. How do you overlook your own wants and interests for the sake of others?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Mark 8:27-38.

This is it, the Caesarea Philippi moment, the moment Jesus asks his followers to identify who he is and what his life is about. Peter gets the title right but the mission wrong. It is clear in this reading that it is important to understand who Jesus is; he is the Son of Man. Jesus is the one who picked up his cross and laid bare his courageous and faithful life for others. This is the way of life that Jesus wants others to follow, too. Jesus was open to rejection, suffering, and his innocent death. Christian discipleship includes picking up our crosses to courageously and faithfully follow the one who holds the universe together. However, Jesus' own disciples did none of that at the time of his death. They were scared and ran away. The good news is that God will do great things through us, Jesus' imperfect followers. Where in your life might Jesus be asking you to pick up your cross to face life's challenges courageously and faithfully?

Pray: Dear God, give me the courage to face life with faith and hope that others may know the power of love and salvation through the cross of Christ. Amen.

SERVICE

The Letter of James points out that the way you live gives others an impression of what God is like. Think of someone you know who especially needs to hear words of mercy and kindness. How can you reach out to them this week?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

Tertullian, an early Christian theologian, marked the sign of the cross on his forehead daily as early as the year 250. In 386, St. Cyril incorporated the sign of the cross during Mass. This is an ancient Christian blessing that reminds us that we are saved through the cross of Christ. This week before and after devotions, make the sign of the cross. Bring together your thumb, index, and middle fingers. Place them on your forehead, then to your chest, then from your left shoulder across to your right shoulder.



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