

Small Groups

Discussion Questions for September 13, 2015 – Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

“Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself.” These words spoken by Jesus in today’s Gospel are both simple and difficult. It’s easy to understand – we must die to self so that we can live for others. Yet what does that mean in practice? How do we “deny” ourselves? If God loves us so much that he made us and wants to be with him for all eternity, then why should we think so little of ourselves as to “deny” our own being? The answer is the cross. God is love, yet Jesus, God, gave himself completely for each of individually. His love surpassed his desire for comfort and safety. His love was so strong, so vibrant, so overwhelming, that he allowed himself to be “denied” so that we can be with him in heaven forever. This is the kind of “denying” that we must practice. We must be willing to die for others, even though we know that we may be hurt or suffer in the process. That moment of suffering will be nothing in comparison to the love we will have being with God forever.

Discussion Questions

1. Discuss the paragraph above and come up with some ways that we can “deny” ourselves.
2. Sometimes, we get comfortable in our prayer and worship. What ways can we “deny” ourselves for the purpose of welcoming others to the faith?
3. How did you do last week with your five minutes of prayer each day? Discuss what you found. Try again this week to spend just 5 minutes in quiet prayer with your Savior. Be silent. Be with him, as if he’s sitting next to you. Talk to him like you talk to a friend.
4. This past week was the anniversary of the attacks by Muslim extremists. Take a moment to pray for all the people who died, their families and the families of the men who perpetrated the killing. Take a moment to pray for all the children of the world and their parents.

Closing Prayer

I love the LORD, who listened to my voice in supplication, Who turned an ear to me on the day I called. I was caught by the cords of death; the snares of Sheol had seized me; I felt agony and dread. Then I called on the name of the LORD, “O LORD, save my life!” Gracious is the LORD and righteous; yes, our God is merciful. The LORD protects the simple; I was helpless, but he saved me. Return, my soul, to your rest; the LORD has been very good to you. For my soul has been freed from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling. I shall walk before the LORD in the land of the living. I kept faith, even when I said, “I am greatly afflicted!” I said in my alarm, “All men are liars!” How can I repay the LORD for all the great good done for me? I will raise the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD. I will pay my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people. Dear in the eyes of the LORD is the death of his devoted. LORD, I am your servant, your servant, the child of your maidservant; you have loosed my bonds. I will offer a sacrifice of praise and call on the name of the LORD. I will pay my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people, In the courts of the house of the LORD, in your midst, O Jerusalem. Hallelujah! Amen.

“God has called us through the Gospel to possess the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (2 Thess 2:14)