

EVERYDAY STEWARDSHIP

April 13, 2025

PALM SUNDAY OF THE LORD'S PASSION

Jesus warns us in the Gospel of Matthew, "If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me." It is an invitation to a way of life, and a plan that leads to holiness. But make no mistake, it is a warning as well. The cross is a sign of victory, but only in light of the Resurrection. Alone, it is a symbol of ultimate sacrifice: the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for a fallen world, and the sacrifice we are called to make to truly follow him.

The power of this symbol has been diminished in popular culture. It is often used in fashion and simple wall art and on bumper stickers and T-shirts, sometimes with Christian clichés and sometimes not. But the cross is something so much more. It is a reminder of the pain, suffering, and death of one who loved us so much that he would give his very life for us. It is our God on that cross. It is God who cries out in despair, feeling the ultimate depth of human emotion. And there lies the key for us in trying to live this life of carrying our crosses.

For those who suffer the death of a loved one, the Father lost his Son. For those who suffer the ravages of disease, his body was broken, beaten, and pierced. For those who feel they have no way out - whether due to prisons that are physical or prisons that are of the mind - he hung on a cross and cried out, "Why?" For those who feel alone and abandoned, he hung on a tree where no one could comfort him, not even his own mother. He has walked in all our shoes, and now we are called to walk in his. In the cross, we find solidarity with the human condition. In an empty tomb, we find our hope.

-Tracy Earl Welliver, MTS