



Cherish All Children

Pray + Educate + Connect + Act

Wednesday Prayer

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

Take Up Your Cross and Follow Me

He 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. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it." Mark 8:34-35

Take up your cross and follow Jesus. That sounds like a pretty tough order. Even the disciples had trouble with that one. Remember Peter denying him three times? Our own fears, our own agendas, trip us up all the time. Taking up our cross means denying our own comfort and security, using our time, resources and energy for the sake of the gospel – for the sake of others, carrying the mantle of God's love for those who can't speak for themselves.

We might be afraid to speak up about something that is too horrible to even name. Or maybe we have to rattle the cages of our church, local authorities, or our legislature in our efforts to protect children from sexual predators. It would be so much easier to just pretend that it's not happening. The disciples often took this path. In Peter's mind, Jesus as Messiah will be a royal king, not one who associates with the lowest in society, and is ultimately rejected and killed. But that is not the end of the story. Jesus is asking us to lose our lives by devoting them to others. In this way we have new life.

So take that first step. Organize a prayer ministry for children. Invite someone to speak to your congregation or your youth about preventing sexual exploitation and trafficking. Find out who is advocating against sex trafficking in your community and join them. Support a local agency serving youth at risk of exploitation or those who have been victims. Lift high the cross of God's love as Jesus did.

Humble and life-giving God, give us the courage to follow you faithfully, especially when it's difficult. As we fight against those who prey on the vulnerability of children, help us shine the light of your love. In Jesus name, Amen.

Today's Wednesday Prayer was written by Ginny Rudloff, retired Cherish All Children Prevention Coordinator.