

MEDITATION ON MY CRUCIFIXION

Luke 9:23

And he said to *them* all, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and **take up his cross daily**, and follow me.

The cross, in the Roman world, was a well-known instrument of death. To hang on the cross was a cruel method of torture and documented cases reveal that sometimes the victims lived for three days in intense agony. Nails in the hands put intense pressure on the median nerve, sending excruciating pain up the arm to explode in the brain. Muscle cramps resulted in a throbbing, relentless assault. The victim experienced intermittent partial asphyxiation and in a spasmodic effort to breathe, tissue was torn from the back from rubbing against the rough timber of the cross, leaving the back raw and bloody. Slowly pericardial fluid compressed the heart and a crushing, agonizing chest pain ensued. Finally, mercifully, the victim died.

The Scripture commands me to take up my cross if I am to follow Jesus. What exactly does this mean?

Our blessed Lord voluntarily experienced this cruel punishment in order to redeem me from the penalty of eternal death, but it is so interesting how the Bible records this grisly act in such simplicity: “And they crucified him . . .” (Mt 27:35). Is this a minimalist statement for my encouragement?

Jesus was willing to take up his cross and carry it to the place of crucifixion, fully aware of the suffering he would endure, and his direction is for me to do the same, daily. I must also, by an act of the will, set my face like a flint (Isa 50:7) and die. I know the process will be painful and agonizingly slow. I know my first attempts will fail as I quickly flee in the opposite direction from Golgotha. I know that when I finally, with much determination, reach the place of crucifixion, I will not welcome the suffering and I will come down from the cross. My flesh will scream and protest at each successive attempt but finally, when once it has been accomplished, and I have experienced the power of the living Christ surging through my dead body, accomplishing His will through me, the sacrifice will be more than worth making and it will bring incomprehensible pleasure.

How amazing it is to be given the privilege to die for His sake, that His life may be manifested through us, daily.

2 Cor 4:11

For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.