



TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

AUGUST 30, 2026

Jeremiah 20:7-9 Romans 12:1-2 Matthew 16:21-27

Prop: Cross

As you listen to the Gospel today, you might think this was Good Friday or a Sunday in Lent, rather than a Sunday in late August! Jesus is talking about his own passion, death and resurrection for the first time in Matthew's Gospel. And the very mention of suffering and death gets Peter upset. Peter christened "the rock" in last Sunday's Gospel, suddenly becomes more like a pile of sand! He takes Jesus aside. "God forbid that any such thing ever happens to you!" The Lord responds, "Get behind me, Satan!" Ouch!!!

Then he tells the apostles and all of us for that matter to pick up your cross.

Let's face it we often look to our Christian faith to make us comfortable. We like the story of Jesus' birth. We appreciate the stories of his miracles. But the cross – not so much.

We can hear Jesus telling us, "Get behind me, Satan!"

Who wants to go through difficult times in life? No one.

Jesus is not telling us to go look for difficult times, and he isn't out to promote suffering as something we should search out. The cross makes sense only if it leads to life and makes us more human; more caring and a compassionate person.

Often, it's the handicapped person who has the greatest empathy for the handicaps of others. Often, it's the recovering alcoholic who is the most sensitive to the difficulties and the power of addiction. It's the person who has gone through chemotherapy, who can accompany someone who is starting that tough process. Often, it's the one who has been through a divorce who knows best how to heal broken hearts. In our religion, Calvary makes sense only because it leads to Easter! But Calvary is tough, but we still walk with hope and having someone to walk with us whose heart knows suffering is such a big help. It's there we help someone carry their cross or someone helps us carry our cross.

Bill Huebsch, a Catholic author, wrote, "To carry the cross is not to seek suffering; it is to remain faithful to compassion in a world that often rejects it. It means forgiving when forgiveness is not deserved, serving when no one notices, and holding fast to hope when hope seems naïve. This is how the Kingdom grows—quietly, through the courage of those who refuse to stop loving."

The cross is not a punishment, but a participation in life with Jesus Christ and one another.

It's part of the call of St. Matthew and all of us: "Come, Follow Me."

That's why we have a cross hanging in our home, around our neck, or right in front of us at Mass.

It's all about following Jesus Christ and being the best version of ourselves. Day by day.

Prayer: Bringing Home the Word