



September 15, 2024

## Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Is 50:5-9a | Jas 2:14-18 | Mk 8:27-35

Written by  
THE  
FAITHFUL  
DISCIPLE

### **GROW** AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

“Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross and follow me.” Jesus’ words in today’s Gospel don’t leave much room for “secondary interpretation.” Deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Jesus. At first glance this may sound intimidating, but let’s think about it in the light of today’s readings. By denying ourselves, we are able to turn more fully toward God and toward others. Isn’t that what James is asking of us in his letter? He says this of faith: “if it does not have works, [it] is dead.” He even uses an example that might sound like something we would hear in a homily today: he asks, if you see someone who doesn’t have proper food or clothing and you simply wish them well without offering assistance, what good are you doing?

### **GO** EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

Certainly, when we help and serve others, we are working concretely to build the kingdom of God on earth. We are, quite literally, being Christ’s hands and feet in the world and following in our Lord’s footsteps. By thinking and acting with this mindset, we are turning toward God; we are seeking to lighten the loads of others – helping them to carry their crosses. In today’s Gospel passage, although Peter’s words, “You are the Christ” were faith-filled and seemed to imply understanding, he was not able to embrace the fullness of Christ’s mission. He rebukes Jesus for “setting himself up” to suffer greatly and be killed. In response, Jesus rebukes Peter and says he is not thinking as God does. As human beings, we know we are not able to think as God does. But we are made in God’s image, and the more we love one another, the more we reflect him in what we do.

**WITNESS** Peter’s mistake was thinking he knew better than God how to do what needed to be done. Is there anything in your life that makes you think you might be like Peter? Choose a corporal or spiritual work of mercy, and spend some time listening to God in prayer as to how he might desire you to perform it.