



STEWARDSHIP AND THE CROSS

Do you ever think about how you experience the cross of Jesus Christ?

Do you ever think about the power of that cross in your daily life?

Is the cross even relevant to your life?

It is to stewards of the Lord, who recognize the hope Christ brings through the gift of his cross. They acknowledge that for them, the cross is their *only* hope.

Being good stewards of our life in Christ is not easy, but to embrace the cross is not only countercultural, it seems absurd. Then again, we cannot avoid what Jesus said to his disciples: “If you wish to come after me you must deny yourself and take up your cross daily and follow me. For if you wish to save your life, you will lose it; but if you lose your life for my sake you will save it” (Luke 9:23-24).

The cross is more readily embraced by people of faith who suffer, are poor, broken, or are the victims of such things as violence, oppression or natural disasters. They see the cross as the hope that no matter what has happened to them, God will see them through. The Father did it for Jesus who hung on the cross, so surely their sufferings will be redeemed by Jesus’ sufferings.

Where people possess much material abundance, comfort and leisure, however, there is a tendency to de-emphasize the cross, to draw away from it. They can’t touch it or feel it so they wish to “save” their lives by looking to other things: power, wealth, fame, relevance, being the center of attention. What is preached about the cross from the pulpit sounds good, but in reality something more tangible is desired.

Christ emptied himself completely in humble obedience, allowing himself to suffer and die out of compassion for the world (Philippians 2:6-11). Good stewards follow his example and work day-to-day to empty themselves and live compassionately; most noticeably by sharing their lives with others. By cultivating a spirit of gratitude, instead of resentment, and by practising generosity instead of measuring out exactly what is owed to them, good stewards experience a freedom from want and care that is truly liberating. By letting go of their dependence on the things of this world, they receive back a hundredfold from a provident and loving God.

As we approach the climax of our liturgical year, the Easter Triduum, let us ask the Holy Spirit for an even deeper awareness of the cross in our lives. Let us find hope in the cross and pray that as we embrace it, we too will experience in a special way the joy of new life in the risen Lord.