



## Week Leading up to 4.25.21: Laying Down Ones Life by Picking Up the Cross

**\*(Start with reviewing the previous Meetings Challenge or discuss prior to sharing this week's challenge.)**

**Let's Begin:** Think about how the challenge went for the last session. What went well? What was difficult?

### Opening Prayer:

Begin with a brief moment of silence shaking off any and all distractions or difficulties of the day and remembering that God is always with us.

**Read: Jn 10:11-18**

After the Reading Conclude with this prayer:

*Dear Jesus, You so willingly laid down Your life for us. For this we offer great praise and gratitude. Inspire in us the awareness to follow Your example in our daily lives. In Your Holy Name. Amen.*

### Reflection or Discussion Question:

1. In the reading today we hear Jesus say, "I am the good shepherd, and I know mine and mine know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I will lay down my life for the sheep." What does this verse mean to you? How does it directly apply to your life?

**YouTube Video:** How to Pick Up Your Cross with Fr. Schmitz (10:58)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=WhivUtZhdRI&feature=youtu.be>

### Reflection or Discussion Questions:

2. What are your thoughts on the concept of "harder is holier"? Does it change your perspective of God knowing that this is a myth?
3. Fr. Schmitz shares that taking up your cross means to align our wants to God's will for us. Sometimes it will be the same and other times it may not be. How do we know what we want is in alignment or in conflict with what God wills?
4. Have you ever experienced taking up your cross with or without Jesus? Was there a difference? Is there a personal cross that you are dealing with right now that you would like to share?
5. Regarding active purification, have you thought of a cross as something you've chosen? How do you make the most of the crosses you have "chosen"? {Active purification means we take action for those things we have chosen to do for God. Passive purification means we say "yes" to those things we do not choose or do not want in our lives. In both cases God calls us to engage in the situation.}
6. Is there an example of a passive purification that you have experienced that you can share? Would you consider COVID-19 a passive purification opportunity?
7. Which do you find harder to do - Active purification or passive purification? Why so?

**Session Challenges:** {Choose one, two or all}

- Write Jesus a short note thanking Him for all of the passive crosses in your life and how they have helped you draw closer to Him.
- It requires practice to actively pick up our crosses. Choose one thing and do it every day this week to show God that you are picking up your daily cross.
- Look for a person you know who has a heavy passive cross in their life and send him/her a note or text letting him/her know that you are thinking of him/her.

**Closing Prayer:** (Leaders: We recommended offering time during the closing prayer for participants to offer personal intentions.) *Dear Jesus, in Your Holy Name there is great power. May we call on it to align our will to Yours, so that we may truly become the holy people You know we can be. We rest in the confidence of knowing that You wish to help us, walk with us, and share Your strength with us when we carry our own crosses. We ask for Your continued guidance to be Your active disciples, willing to take up our own crosses as well as walk and support others who have especially heavy crosses to bear. Fill us with Your Holy Spirit so that we may discern with Your wisdom, act with Your courage, and love with a heart as endless as Yours. In Your great name, we pray. Amen*

**{Optional additional Readings}** Sunday Reading 1: Acts 4:8-12 Sunday Reading 2: 1 Jn 3:1-2