

## Take Up Thy Cross

**Matthew 16:24-Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.** (KJV)

Following the Lord Jesus Christ requires responsibly taking up our personal cross. Denying the self of all that is not of Christ is necessary to follow Jesus Christ. Being a Christian is the most serious undertaking necessitating firm commitment. Resolute discipline enables the believer to deny the self and take up the cross. Jesus Christ gives the believer the strength to deny the self and take up the cross.

**Mark 10:21-Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.** (KJV)

The Third Week of Great Lent focuses on Christ's Cross as a source of strength. Believers participating in the Lenten fast become tired as the journey progresses. The Lord Jesus Christ accompanies the faithful believers on the Lenten Journey. Attentive believers realize Christ is constantly present in the journey to Pascha. Taking up the cross in the journey verifies the commitment to follow Jesus Christ.

**Luke 14:27-And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.** (KJV)

Jesus Christ has expectations for His followers journeying to God's Kingdom. Believers are expected to be responsible in taking up his or her personal cross. Being a faithful Christian involves focused effort and continued personal sacrifice. All Christians share in the expectation of personal sacrifice and taking up the cross. The Christian community is bound together in sacrifice and taking up the cross.

**John 19:17-And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha:** (KJV)

Jesus Christ does not expect more of His followers than He does of Himself. Jesus personally experienced the weight of His Cross as an example for all. The personal standard for all Christian believers exists in the Lord Jesus Christ. The best way to learn to follow Jesus Christ is to study Christ in the Gospel. God's Holy Church proclaims the Gospel and teaches the life of Jesus Christ.

**I Corinthians 1:18-For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.** (KJV)

The power of the Cross becomes known in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. Miracles of the Cross are recorded down through the centuries in the Church. Resurrection joy was revealed following Jesus Christ's death on the Cross. Believers are baptized into the life of Jesus Christ under the sign of the Cross. The Cross of Christ opens the pathway to the Heavenly Kingdom for the believer.

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Holy Hieromartyr Theodotus, Bishop of Cyrenia. March 2/15, 2023. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic