The Sunday after the Exaltation of the Cross

Mk.8:34-9:1

When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels. And He said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power.

The Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Luke 5:1-11

And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon Him to hear the word of God, He stood by the lake of Gennesaret, And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets. And He entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And He sat down, and taught the people out of the ship. Now when He had left speaking, He said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answering said unto Him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at Thy word I will let down the net. And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken: And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men. And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him. (KJV)

Both Gospel messages for today have to do with following Jesus Christ. The Gospel for the Sunday after the Exaltation of the Cross speaks to picking up our personal crosses and following Jesus Christ.

St. John's Gospel reveals the value of the soul and the importance of caring for the soul. Taking up one's personal cross and following Jesus Christ is consistent with caring for and protecting the soul.

The Lord Jesus Christ established the example for His followers when He took up His own Cross. (Jn. 19:16-18) Jesus did not back away from taking up His Cross. He does not ask more of His followers than what He has done.

Jesus' death on the Cross led to His glorious Resurrection. Believers taking up their personal crosses are empowered by Jesus Christ's example. Responsible believers grow in Christ and are renewed in life.

The importance of listening to Jesus Christ is the Gospel message for the Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost. Peter, James and John had fished without success. They fished without enlisting the help of Jesus Christ.

When Peter and those with him listened to Jesus to try again, they were abundantly successful. When our lives are rooted in Christ and we listen to Christ, we are productive in life. When we try to go life alone without Christ, we fail.

The abundant life exists in Jesus Christ. (Jn. 10:10) Jesus Christ enables believers to utilize their talents and gifts in ways intended. Growth in Christ materializes when Christ's teachings are heeded.

Peter, James and John went from being fisherman to being fishers of men. Their occupations changed dramatically because they listened to and followed Jesus Christ.

Peter, James and John have influenced, changed and enriched human lives down through the centuries. Peter, James and John sensed and responded to Jesus' authenticity.

Believers listening to Jesus Christ and obedient to Christ's teachings realize the truth of Christ's teachings. Listeners to Christ realize Christ is Truth! Jesus experienced pain on the Cross. Jesus Christ rose from the dead!

Believers may experience pain in their personal crosses. Jesus assures believers there is value in dealing with personal crosses in responsible ways. Losing one's life in taking up the personal cross leads to new life in Christ.

Faith and trust are involved in following Christ. Peter trusted Jesus when he decided to listen and began to fish again after having been unsuccessful. Listening to Jesus brought great success.

Peter, James and John left their jobs and families to follow Jesus. Their trust in Jesus was well-placed. The value of listening to Jesus is known in the results. Listeners to Jesus are pleased with the results.

The saints and martyrs through the centuries testify through their lives of the value of listening to Jesus. God's Church proves the value of listening to Jesus. Attentive and obedient believers come to know the truth in the Church.

This Sunday after the Exaltation of the Cross is the good time to recommit to listening carefully to Jesus Christ and following His teachings. Now is the time to responsibly address personal crosses.

Today is the day to be united with Christ. Seek Christ's help in daily life and with the crosses in daily life. Jesus is experienced in dealing with the greatest Cross of all time. He is present to help us with our crosses if we listen.

The Sunday after the Exaltation of the Cross. The Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost. Holy Apostle Quadratus. September 21/October 4, 2026.

Father Rodney Torbic