

# Impact

SEPTEMBER 2023

*Bring faith to life. Find life in faith.*

## Impact this month

### DENY YOURSELF

*Of what self-centered, selfish, or self-deprecating tendencies must you let go?*

### TAKE UP YOUR CROSS

*In what burden may you find grace? How may you be called to sacrifice, and in doing so, find abundance?*

### FOLLOW CHRIST

*What commitment will you make to grow in love with and follow the Lord?*

### WHAT HAS HOLD OF YOU? LET IT GO

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Does something have hold of you? Perhaps the desire for possessions drives you; maybe it is the need for security; perhaps you hold onto your relationships with people too closely, or think far too much of yourself. It is easy to find ourselves holding on too tightly to something or someone. We may find comfort in it for a while, but realize in time that it is fleeting. **Jesus has a different vision for our lives.** When we cling to things, people, or self-reliance, we lose the beauty of God's vision for us and for all of creation. In holding tight to what we think we want, we lose the possibility of a greater, more profound, deeply meaningful way of life.

### SEPARATE YOUR WANTS FROM YOUR NEEDS

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Most of us spend a lot of time thinking about what we want. We dream of a new house, better car, career success, or a life of unbridled happiness. These wants may be worthy goals for a life that is centered in God and rooted in faith. But often, the wants stem from misplaced priorities, putting possessions or the desire for control before our relationship with Christ and all that we are called to be and to do as Christian disciples. Jesus invites us to let go of this want-driven life, to instead embrace his way of self-giving love. **When we separate our wants from our needs, what is most important comes into focus.** Life is simpler, more purposeful and filled with joy.

### WHAT DO YOU OWN, AND WHAT OWNS YOU?

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The late Archbishop Thomas Murphy recalled a moment in which he was preparing for serious surgery. In his reflection, he asked himself, "What do I own, and what owns me?"

Archbishop Murphy had a dramatic insight at a pivotal point in this life. "I know that my whole understanding and appreciation of the gifts and resources I possess took on new meaning. It is amazing how a divine economy of life and health provides a unique perspective of what really matters." **What really matters for you?** Jesus asks us to find meaning in a life that is centered in love, forgiveness, mercy, trust, and compassion.

### TAKE A STEP

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Throughout his ministry and ultimately on the cross, **Jesus showed us that true security and meaning lie in letting go, in living for God and others.** As followers of Jesus Christ, we find that the things the world holds out in front of us as markers of success often lack meaning and ultimately distract us from what really matters. We will find true happiness by losing ourselves to the loving, merciful will of God. We will gain a new and enriching perspective when we see that all we are, have, and will be are gifts from God, to be nurtured and shared out of gratitude for all that we have been given.

*"For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."*

MT 16: 24-25

## BRING FAITH TO LIFE

Sometimes it is difficult to think about God's will. Our fierce human independence balks at the idea of someone else's will being important, even if it is *God* whose will we are considering. Yet each of us has moments in which we sense what we are called to do: dreams of making a contribution in the life of another; a simple act of kindness that could make a real difference; a sense of purpose or fruitfulness in which we may

find meaning in life; a desire to show compassion, share mercy, forgive another, or give of ourselves in a new and substantial way.

St. John XXIII understood these interior promptings that are glimmers of the will of God: "Consult not your fears but your hopes and your dreams. Think not about your frustrations, but about your unfulfilled potential. Concern yourself not with what you tried and failed in, but with what it is still possible for you to do."



For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord. As high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are my ways above your ways and my thoughts above your thoughts.

Is 55:8-9

## LIVE FOR THE LORD

Throughout the autumn, we focus on the **demands of discipleship** - what it means to commit ourselves to Christ with our mind, body, and spirit.

**Baptized** into Christ's life, we are called to live for the Lord, in all of the circumstances of daily life.



**What does it mean to live for the Lord?** Our Sunday readings this month give us insight into all we are called to be and to do, **to make Christ's mission our mission**, to make the Lord's presence more abundantly known in the world:

**Love:** The commandments...are summed up in this saying, namely, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself. (9/10)

**Be Good:** Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect. (9/3)

**Forgive:** "Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive? As many as seven times?" Jesus answered, "I say to you, not seven times but seventy-seven times." (9/17)

**Sacrifice:** I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship. (9/3)

**Be Generous:** Are you envious because I am generous? (9/24)

**Be Merciful:** The Lord is kind and merciful. (9/17)

**Be Humble:** The last will be first, and the first will be last. (9/24)