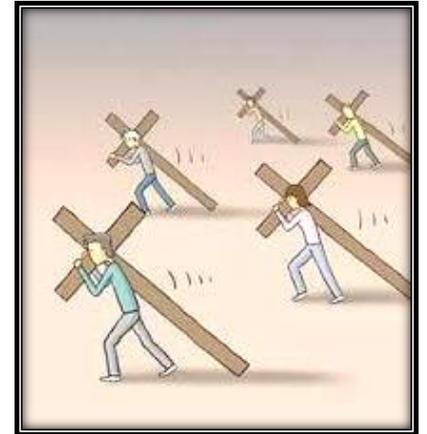




YES, EVERYONE HAS A CROSS

All of us – every human person created according to the image and likeness of God – has a cross to carry. It doesn't matter if the colour of your skin is black or white, if you are male or female, rich or poor, Spanish-speaking or English-speaking, Catholic or non-Catholic: everyone has a cross. In fact, the colour of our skin, our sex, our wealth, the language we speak, and our religion can often be crosses themselves.



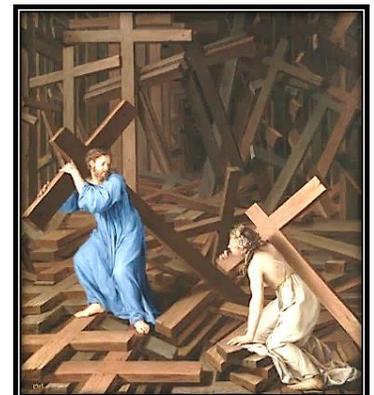
When considering the crosses we carry, the ones that readily come to mind are the so-called "physical" ones such as Cancer, Diabetes, and Leukemia or the "psychological" ones such as Paranoia, Schizophrenia, and Depression. These crosses are colour blind. They're not chauvenistic. They are multi-lingual. They are "non-denominational". And even if we don't carry them ourselves, all of us know people who do.

There-in is what makes our own crosses weigh even heavier on our minds and hearts/our shoulders: other people's crosses. The son addicted to drugs, the daughter fallen away from the Church, the brother going through a divorce, the widowed mother, the substitute teacher in school, the temp-secretary at work, the husband on active duty, ... Yes, everyone has a cross.



"The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to those of us who are being saved it is the power of God" (I Corinthians i:18). That is why in the Church's Liturgical Year we actually "celebrate" the Cross of Jesus Christ on two different occasions: Good Friday and 14 September; the Feast of *The Exaltation of the Holy Cross*. And while it may not be the subject of our consciousness during other liturgies, the Cross is the Source from which they all – especially the Sacraments – receive their efficacy, and in turn, provide recipients in the state of grace, the power of God to carry our crosses.

In the words of Saint Francis de Sales: "The everlasting God has in His wisdom foreseen from eternity the cross that He now presents to you as a gift from His inmost Heart. This cross He now sends you He has considered with His all-knowing eyes, understood with His Divine mind, tested with His wise justice, warmed with His loving arms and weighed with His own hands to see that it be not one inch too large and not one ounce too heavy for you. He has blessed it with His Holy Name, anointed it with His consolation, taken one last glance at you and your courage, and then sent it to you from Heaven, a special greeting from God to you, an alms of the All-Merciful Love of God."



***"Deny thyself, pick up thy cross and follow Me."
(Saint Mark VIII:34)***