

Jesus teaches us in this Sunday's Gospel passage, "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me." (Mark 8:27-35). Many of our parishioners bear a cross of personal loss, illness, or significant family hardships, and we all face daily family and personal challenges. Our deep faith and hope emboldens us in the Lord to meet the significant and day-to-day challenges of our lives, to take comfort in Christ's mercy and compassion, and to follow His message of love, truth and peace.

In the Collect, or Opening Prayer of Sunday's Mass, our priest will pray on behalf of the entire congregation: "Look upon us, O God, Creator and ruler of all things, and, that we may feel the working of your mercy, grant that we may serve you with all our heart."

What a fitting prayer as we adjust to our busy fall schedules, particularly with the challenges of the 'new normal' as the pandemic recedes in our community. As each of us responds to our family and personal challenges, or perhaps endures significant hardships, the prayer offered by our priest in Sunday's Collect calls us to rededicate ourselves to opening our hearts ever more fully to the endless love showered upon us by the Lord. And to respond to that divine love by growing in holiness and through showing love of God and charity to our neighbor in need.

Millions of persons in our country and in many parts of the world are suffering greatly from the impact of recent natural disasters in the form of storms, floods and wildfires. The pandemic still causes widespread physical suffering in parts of our world. Further, wars and extreme violence across the world results in overwhelming injury and harm to so many individuals and families. In our Eucharistic celebration this Sunday, we join in fervent prayer for those who are severely hurt by the pandemic, natural disasters and war; for those refugee families fleeing violence seeking to live in peace; and for those migrants seeking to provide good stewardship for their families.

Peace,

Deacon Don