



Week 1 Devotionals



Day 1

Because the word “synod,” loosely translated, means “walking together,” I think of that as exactly what it means to journey to the cross—we do it together. Even Jesus, who suffered and died alone, had the aid of Simon of Cyrene part of the way. That’s a helpful reminder to all of us that, even in the most personal of trials and challenges, God’s intent is that we not suffer alone. For the sake of the world, we journey to the cross *together*.

Bp. Brian Maas
Nebraska Synod

Day 2

The past several years and on several occasions, I have received a cross as a gift. One such occasion was when I received my certification as a Parish Ministry Associate. For a long time, those crosses were stored away until one day I came across the tote. What do you do with a tote full of crosses? Put them up on the wall. I now have a wall of crosses. Those original plus several I received during my travels to Costa Rica, Germany, the Holy Land, and Tanzania. The cross has the same meaning no matter what country around the world they are from – Christ's victory over sin and death along with God's never-ending love. Thank you, God, for this special symbol of our faith.

Sandy Terry
Women of the ELCA

Day 3

Journeying to the cross to me as a youth ministry leader means leaving our youth rooms, and our comfort zones to form relationships with others at school, at play, and all around us. We must acknowledge the darkness, pain, and suffering that is the message of the cross. We must notice people and see their realities. As Jesus tells us in Matthew 25 we must offer food, drink, clothes, welcome, and take care of and visit others. It is this ministry of presence that helps us recognize Jesus in others and journey to the resurrection side of the cross together.

Sharon Hardel
Lincoln Area Youth Ministry Leaders

Day 4

In our world today, there is one thing that helps us to journey together in airplanes to visit other places and countries to meet other people. That thing does not require us to learn any language in order to journey together with other people in airplanes. It is call, "Passport", when you want to visit your family, relatives, and friends or have a mission to other countries. A passport does not require you to know the language of the country that you are visiting. Because of that, Love and faith unifies us to journey together in airplanes, and it is always needed in order to go to the airplane and that is why I compare it to faith. In Gospel Matthew 8:5-13: Faith and Love is a Passport to all Christians journey to the cross and to heaven. Faith connects us with Jesus and with other Christians in the world and that helps us to journey together to the cross. A centurion man was a man of faith during that time among all gentiles and Israel. He said to Jesus, "you cannot come into my house because I am not a good

person". Faith and love are the only way that unifies us with Christ, and with each other. Jesus said, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace".

Rev. John Gok Badeng

Nile Lutheran, Omaha

Day 5

Formed by God's creative spark
Opened by Christ's gentle grace
Shaped by the Spirit's powerful presence

We are moved to be the Church

In a world that is hungry and thirsty
Not only for the needs of bodily life
But also -- and mostly
for acceptance, love, and mercy

Listening for the invitation
We hear the cry of desire
And feel the emptiness
That yearns to be filled

In being available and responsive
We forget ourselves
And learn how to be followers
One in Christ

The Church for the sake of the world.

Deacon Connie Stover
Seeking the Spirit Within

Day 6

Many people have an idea that salvation is heaven someday, with no work and no bodily needs. But that is not an image that we find in scripture. A simple definition of salvation as

found in scripture would be “new life.” In the face of a broken life in a broken world, salvation is all things made new, including new life. The problem with new life as an objective is that it requires death to the old life, and we have a hard time letting go of the old. I believe that Jesus is God, come to meet us where we are, in our broken world and broken life, to live that broken life as one of us, to show us that God loves us no matter where we are, and to make each of us God’s own child and take us home, if we would just come with him, that is, let go of this life (die to it, as Jesus did) and take on a new one. But the setting of Jesus’ work is here and now, not “heaven,” someday. If salvation is new life, it has to be lived to be of any good. And salvation is a gift given to us where we are, in the midst of the world. And if new life is freely given, already, that means work for the sake of the world is not what we do to earn salvation, it is living it.

Oh, Lord, you have joined us on our journey in a world broken by sin and death. Give us the hope, trust, and courage to join you on your journey, through death, to new life, even in this world.

Anonymous

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