

SEPTEMBER 3, 2023
FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
Church Year Cycle A



THEME FOR THE WEEK:

Following Jesus is not an easy path.

WEEKLY MILESTONES:



Take a moment to have each person share a recent mountain high and/or valley low in their lives.

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THE WEEK:



Then Jesus told his disciples, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.” **Matthew 16:24 (NRSV)**

GOSPEL READING INTRODUCTION:



In this reading, Jesus begins to tell his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem to suffer, be killed, and on the third day be raised. Then Jesus tells his disciples that if any want to become his followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow.

GOSPEL READING:

Read: Matthew 16:21-28

Take up your cross and follow

GOSPEL READING QUESTIONS:



<p>1. In this reading, who did Jesus tell his disciples would cause him great suffering in Jerusalem?</p>	<p>A Tax collectors B Thieves and bandits C The Roman government D Elders, chief priests, and scribes</p>
<p>2. In this reading, what did Peter take Jesus aside to tell him after Jesus foretells his death and resurrection?</p>	<p>A Surely, this will not happen B God forbid it, Lord! C You can not possibly know this D I hope not</p>
<p>3. In this reading, what did Jesus say to Peter after he told Jesus that this must never happen to him?</p>	<p>A Peter, you need to grow up B We can run and hide C Get out of my way! D Get behind me, Satan!</p>

Answer key on page 2



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GOSPEL READING DISCUSSION:



- What words stay in your mind or what ideas do you have from this reading?
- What message do you hear for us in this reading?
- How does this reading influence your thoughts, feelings, or future actions?

RELATED READINGS FOR REVIEW AND HIGHLIGHTING:



Jeremiah 15:15-21	Jeremiah is reassured
Romans 12:9-21	Rules for Christian living
2 Timothy 4:1-5	Paul's instructions to Timothy
Philippians 1:27-30	Live your life in a worthy manner
1 Corinthians 12:12-26	One body with many members
Psalms 26:1-8	Prayer of an innocent person

RELATED READINGS DISCUSSION:



What similar themes or general concept did you discover in these related readings? How do they connect to the theme for the week: Following Jesus is not an easy path?

HYMN OF THE WEEK:



Just a Closer Walk with Thee

Text: North American Traditional
Music: North American Traditional

[Evangelical Lutheran Worship #697]



<https://youtu.be/Y6Ks49apfIE>

CLOSING PRAYER:

Dear God, help us to pick up our crosses, suffer, and follow Jesus for what is right, just, and loving. Amen.

CLOSING BLESSING:

May the cross of Christ free you to care for all.



Answer Key: 1-D, 2-B, 3-D