

## THE CROSS OF LOVE AND SERVICE

June 27th, 2005

**LEADER:** In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. (Invite persons present to pause for a few moments of silent recollection and to offer any special intentions.)

In this weekend's gospel, we see Jesus once again send the disciples out. As baptized members of Christ's body, we share in this mission of discipleship, and so Christ's words of instruction are as relevant for us today as they were to his first followers.

**READER:** Jesus called the twelve to him and sent them out with the following instructions: "Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple – truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward."

**LEADER:** And so what is the basis of our mission as disciples of Christ? Jesus makes it clear that selfless love and service are to be the foundational characteristics of our Christian identity. As we put the needs of our sisters and brothers before our own, Jesus makes it clear that the cross will be our constant companion. Just as Jesus embraced the death of his own needs on the cross for the sake of the human family, so too are we to suffer the death of our personal self interest for the sake of others. Death of self for the sake of others is the key to fullness of life.

**ALL:** Lord Jesus, be with us as we ponder your life-giving word. May your divine wisdom transform our attitudes and actions so that we become faithful disciples of your gospel. We make this prayer in your most holy name – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.