

CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

Eblast

February 22, 2024



Absalom Jones and Black History Month Celebration

Please plan on attending this important Diocesan Black History month event in celebration of Absalom Jones, the first priest of African descent ordained in America. The Saturday morning session features a keynote speaker, the Rev. Ryan Hawthorne followed by lunch and then the Eucharist. This is intended to be a day of reflection, formation and fellowship. If you plan on attending this event please let Canon Melinda know. You are welcome to ride with Canon Melinda, she leaves from our parking lot at 7:40 a.m. and returns by 4:30 p.m. THIS Saturday. Please note there is **NO COST** to attend but registration is required and a link can be found at the bottom of this page. **REGISTER TODAY. The event is being held at St. Stephen's Pro-Cathedral in downtown Wilkes-Barre**

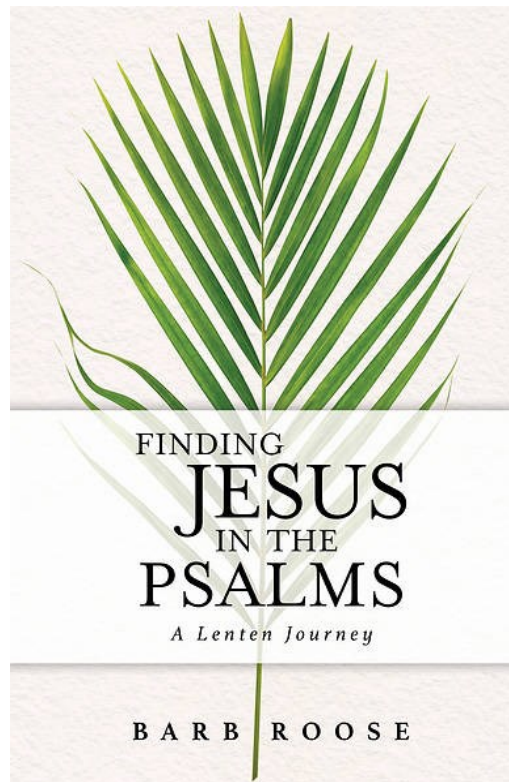
Registration is needed for your participation: [click here](#)

February is Heart Health Month/Community Supper



The Church of the Redeemer is host of The Valley's Community Supper (a group of five Valley Churches) on the last Thursday of the month, for ten months of the year. Each month is sponsored by a different community group. February will be sponsored by the Guthrie Clinic's Cardiac Cath Lab. In addition to making dessert and contributing \$100 toward the cost of the meal, they will provide a heart healthy menu, (Roast Chicken, Baked Potato's, Green Beans, a blood pressure clinic AND every diner receives a gift! Pictured to the left are participants from last year's supper.

Lenten Book Study



Our Lenten Book Study continues Monday, February 26th at 6:30 p.m. at St. John Lutheran Church 207 S. Hopkins St.

We will gather all in the Nursery and then break into three smaller groups for discussions. With the number of participants, we feel smaller groups would allow for more people to participate in the conversations. We then will meet back as a large group. Another Lenten opportunity is Love Your Neighbor series. Please see next page.

Outline of the Bible Study:

February 26, Chapter 2

March 4, Chapter 3

March 11, Chapter 4

March 18, Chapter 5

March 25, Chapter 6 & Conclusion

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

A Lenten Series

Valley United Presbyterian Church and the Epiphany Roman Catholic Church are coming together to offer presentations on the topic of "Love Your Neighbor" on Wednesday evenings in Lent.

Leaders from local organizations will speak on our responsibilities to fellow human beings. A freewill offering will be collected for various organizations.

Feb 21 - Obligations to the Poor

Speakers: A panel featuring Kim Paul from The Bridge, Christina Ramirez from The Salvation Army, and Patrick Aquilio from Catholic Charities

Location: Epiphany Parish Hall

Feb 28 - Life and Dignity of the Human Person

Speaker: Anja Miller, Guthrie Hospice

Location: Epiphany Parish Hall

March 6 - Care for God's Creation

Speaker: Marty Borko, Carantouan Greenway

Location: Epiphany Parish Hall

March 13 - Boundaries and Relationships

Speaker: Dawn Clover, Guthrie Employee Assistance Program

Location: Valley United Fellowship Hall

March 20 - Solidarity and Peace

Speaker: Father Dan Toomey and Pastor Sharan Knoell

Location: Valley United Fellowship Hall

Dinner and fellowship start at 5:45pm on each evening.

Join us this Lenten season as we earnestly listen to the Word of God and learn what we can do to show our love for our neighbors.



Constance Baker Motley: First Black Women to serve as a federal judge.



Born on Sept. 14, 1921, Motley was the daughter of immigrant working-class parents who emigrated to the U.S. from the Caribbean island of Nevis. She grew up close to Yale University and experienced Jim Crow laws during her travels to a Tennessee college when she was forced into a decrepit "colored" car.

While Motley had her mind set on becoming a lawyer, she couldn't afford to attend college until she managed to impress Clarence W. Blakeslee, a white businessman and philanthropist from New Haven, Connecticut, while speaking at a community center. The man paid for her education at Fisk University and Columbia Law School. She graduated from Columbia in 1946.

During Motley's work with the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund from the late 1940s through the early 1960s, she personally argued 10 Supreme Court cases, winning nine of them. She oversaw lawsuits that integrated the universities of Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi and occasionally represented Martin Luther King Jr. during his fight for civil rights.

By 1965, Motley left the NAACP to pursue politics in New York. She went on to become the first Black woman in the state senate as well as the first woman elected as Manhattan borough president. A year later, she became a federal judge serving the Southern District of New York. She died in 2005.

She was a woman of faith and attended The Riverside Church in New York City. Its website states that it is an interdenominational, interracial, international, open, welcoming, and affirming church and congregation. Her obituary can be found here:

[Constance Baker Motley, Civil](#)

[Rights Trailblazer, Dies at 84 - The New York Times \(nytimes.com\)](#)

Sources: ABC News and The New York Times Photo Credit: Bettmann Archive via Getty Images. Picuted Rev. Martin Luther King with attorneys Constance Motley and William Kunstler.

Readings for February 24, 2024

First Reading: Genesis 17:1-7, 15-22

Psalm 22:22-30

Second Reading: Romans 4:13-25

Gospel: Mark 8:31-38

Scripture Reflection

Reflection on the Gospel by Paul C Shupe from Daily Feast: Meditations from Feasting on the Word

The church that rightly lifts high the cross of Christ all too often neglects the narrative of faith articulated in Jesus' teaching here: that discipleship involves giving up our own lives through sacrificial love, leading to the surprising and ultimately saving discovery that in giving we have received. We know this, of course. We preach it on occasion, and sometimes even live it out, too. Frequently the final words of worship—our benedictions to the congregation—are exhortations to go forth to love and serve God. But the absence of permanent symbols of Jesus' call to take up our own crosses, to be his disciples by taking full responsibility for going ourselves on the sacrificial journey that Jesus pioneered, perhaps helps to explain why churches become preoccupied with membership and not with discipleship. Perhaps what we need is a multitude of crosses, one for each of us, at the back door of our sanctuaries, to be taken up as we return to the world of home and family, work and commerce, service and play—symbols of the call to discipleship that we have heard and accept anew. How have you received love through giving? How have you received love through receiving?





Our Undercroft is a MESS.

We have four decades or more of once cherished items being stored in the Undercroft. We have so much stuff that it has become a fire hazard and storage boxes are deteriorating. As a result, our rector has tasked Linda Murrelle with organizing a crew to look at all the things stored there and determine what should be kept and what should be thrown out. St. Mary's Guild, Altar Guild, and Sunday School will be given labels to affix to items that should be kept. We anticipate that the job will be completed by Easter. If your inner Marie Kondo is intrigued and you're willing to help please contact Linda or the Parish Office.

We are now accepting clean rummage items.

The Wildcat closet is still accepting donation of Sweat pants, Sweat shirts, socks and toiletries. The box is located in the atrium . Linda Murrelle will pick up your donations and make sure they are delivered to the proper locations.



For the Month of **February** we will be collecting cereal for our local food pantries.



Mark your Calendar

A celebration for our stained-glass windows. April 14, 2024. Tribute Quartet, a Gospel group out of Tennessee will be performing.



St. Mary's Guild will meet on March 5th at 6 p.m. in the Parish Hall. Canon Melinda will treat us with tea and finger food. Afterward we will have a silver cleaning party.

Some of the silver we will be cleaning will be from the Sacristy in preparation for Easter



Serving in Worship at Redeemer

February 25

Reader: Amy Murrelle

Usher: Glenn Murrelle

Greeter: Linda Murrelle

March 3

Reader: Glenda Hinsman

Usher: Walter Chaykosky

Greeter: Phoebe Marshall



Michael Atanasoff 2/23

Mitzi Mohn 2/26

Seth Murrelle 2/26

Aimee Marshall 2/26

Ray Pennoyer 2/29

Katie Moreno 3/2

Barbara Park 3/2

Kristina Felt 3/2

John & Tricia Johnson 2/28



Lent Resources from Episcopal Relief and Development

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 22

In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets. Matthew 7:12

Today's reading from the Gospel of Matthew contains Jesus' famous moral formula, his "Golden Rule," which appears across many religions and moral philosophies throughout the world: "In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets" (Matthew 7:12).

In the centuries since Jesus uttered these words, many Christian teachers have reflected deeply on this teaching and have offered their own variations on this theme. My personal favorite comes from the fourth-century theologian Lactantius, who, in his *Divine Institutes*, considered how Jesus' teaching touched on public life and justice. Knowing how deeply Roman society valued family, he restated Jesus' Golden Rule for his culture: "The whole nature of justice lies in our providing for others through humanity what we provide for our own families and relatives through affection." He asked Romans to provide for vulnerable families what they so freely provided for their own.

Today's readings

Psalm 138 | Esther (Apocrypha) 14:1–6, 12–14

Matthew 7:7–12

In many cultures, it is traditional to draw strict boundaries around who we consider family, yet God asks us to consider whether children across the globe are also, somehow, our children. What does it mean to "provide through humanity" for an expanded sense of family?

THE
GOLDEN
→ RULE ←

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 23

Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court with him, or your accuser may hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. Matthew 5:25

In today's reading from the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus warns about anger, grudges and simmering feuds. The Jesus we meet here is a practical peacemaker. Rather than trying to resolve conflicts with acts of vengeance or through a shaky court system, he urges his followers to seek a peaceful resolution first, even if it literally means doing so on the way to court.

Biblical scholars frequently note that Jesus was speaking to a society obsessed with questions of honor and shame. While this is a sweeping generalization, it wasn't uncommon for insults to be "resolved" through acts of vengeance. More striking still is Jesus' portrayal of the arbitrariness of a judge's decision and his sense that, whether a party is innocent or not, even the innocent may have to pay dearly. "Truly I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny" (Matthew 5:26).

Jesus is seeking a culture change. He observes how his community keeps spiraling into violence and how a corrupt judicial system rarely achieves justice and instead urges peaceful ways forward. It is practical advice that still feels both radical and resonant today.

Today's readings

Psalms 130 | Ezekiel 18:21–28 | Matthew 5:20–26

Conflicts, large and small, happen all around us every day. How can we be peacemakers today?



The Sermon on the Mount

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24

If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. John 15:7–8

Last summer, I was on a crowded train and had the opportunity (if that's the word) to overhear a young man in his 20s loudly and confidently decrying how lazy everyone had become. Speaking to his girlfriend, he even denounced people who took a week off work due to illness and declared that not only had he never done so but also his father hadn't done so either. He declared that top achievers, outperformers and successful people don't take time off.

At this point, I began desperately searching for my headphones, open windows, available exits—anything to get away from his bravado.

I mention all this because the idolization of productivity is all around us. Yet the Gospel points us in a very different direction in defining fruitfulness. In today's readings, Jesus offers beautiful organic imagery. He describes himself as the “true vine” and God as “the vine grower,” and he says that those who “abide” in God's love bear much fruit.

The active verb here is to “abide” in God. It isn't to achieve in God. It isn't to outperform or level up to God. Heck, it isn't even to succeed in God. All Jesus asks today is that we abide and be like trees planted by streams of water, trusting that we will yield fruit in due season.

Today's readings

Psalm 15 | Acts 1:15–26 | Philippians 3:13–21

John 15:1,6–16

Amidst so much talk about efficiency and productivity, what does it mean to abide and bear fruit in God's time?



SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT, FEBRUARY 25

Grant to us, Lord, we pray, the spirit to think and do always those things that are right, that we, who cannot exist without you, may by you be enabled to live according to your will; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 232

Today's readings

Psalm 22:22–30 | Genesis 17:1–7, 15–16 | Romans 4:13–25 | Mark 8:31–38



MONDAY, FEBRUARY 26

But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return.

Luke 6:35a

Nearly a year ago, my spouse and I visited the Eldridge Street Synagogue, a stunning place that was once a center of Jewish life on the Lower East Side of New York. After having fallen into disrepair, it was painstakingly restored, and today it is a museum rich in stories and artifacts from the community. Among the encased artifacts are two loan cards made to members of the synagogue in the 1920s. These cards record \$100 and \$25 loans issued and then repaid three weeks later at no interest. The word “paid” is scrawled in beautiful script over the first card.

Now, what on earth does this have to do with the Gospel reading today? This passage is one of my favorites because of a single line, an utterance so brief that it is rarely mentioned today. Quietly embedded within Jesus’ teaching on nonviolence and loving one’s enemy is what some have called Jesus’ single most important economic teaching: “But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return.”

When I think about those loan cards from the Eldridge Street synagogue, I wonder about the people who needed those \$100- and \$25-dollar loans. Was an eviction imminent? Was it for relief in the wake of a fire? We don't know much about the people who received those loans, but the fact that they were offered without interest tells us a lot about the compassion and care of the community that extended them. May we continue to use our financial resources to practice love and compassion in our communities.

Today's readings

Psalm 79:1–9 | Daniel 9:3–10 | Luke 6:27–38

Why does Jesus talk about poverty so much? What does Jesus mean when he says that giving without interest is a way of loving others? What are the practical implications of this teaching?



TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 27

All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted.

Matthew 23:12

Most leadership courses begin with the premise that a good, credible leader is someone who is clear about their values and models the way. If you want to encourage generosity, you must do so by publicly modeling generosity. If you want people to address conflict calmly and thoughtfully, you must model this for others. Leaders have the opportunity to set the tone and parameters for what constitutes appropriate behavior, and they often do so more effectively through their actions rather than their words.

In today's reading, Jesus critiques the wide gap that frequently exists between religious leaders' words and deeds. He notes that while the religious leaders of his day spoke of humility, their actions, titles, dress and performative righteousness modeled both self-importance and the need to be at the center of all things. This behavior stands in stark contrast to the grounded humility Jesus hopes his followers will model: "All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted," (Matthew 23:12).



WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28

It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be the first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. Matthew 20:26–28

One of the most important, recurring themes in the Gospels is the large gap between Jesus' descriptions of God's kingdom and how his followers imagine it. In today's passage, the mother of the sons of Zebedee makes the same mistake generations of Christians have made by equating Jesus' coming kingdom with worldly wealth and power.

She wants in—or, more specifically, she wants her sons to benefit from high positions in Jesus' coming reign. Jesus' response is one of surprise and bafflement. He has just finished describing the way of the cross that awaits him. How could anyone mistake the shameful crucifixion he must endure with powerful thrones, golden crowns and worldly power?

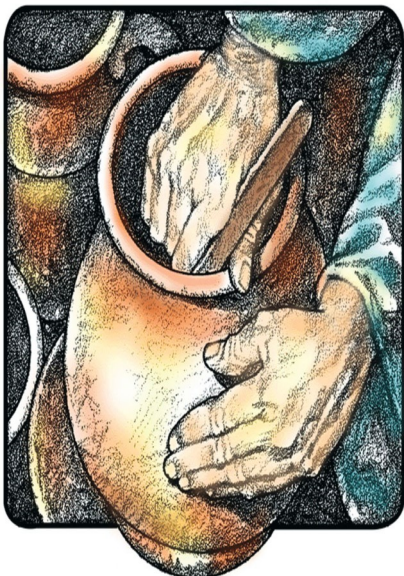
Over the past year, I've visited many museums that focus on medieval religious art. Very often, Jesus is portrayed as a royal king, replete with golden crown, scepter and orb. While I understand that this imagery is intended to convey the glory and power of the resurrected Christ, ruling and judging from his universal throne, I can't help but wonder whether such imagery misses the point. For generations, Christians have kept trying to put a golden crown on one who wore a crown of thorns.

Today's readings

Psalms 31:9–16 | Jeremiah 18:1–11, 18–20

Matthew 20:17–28

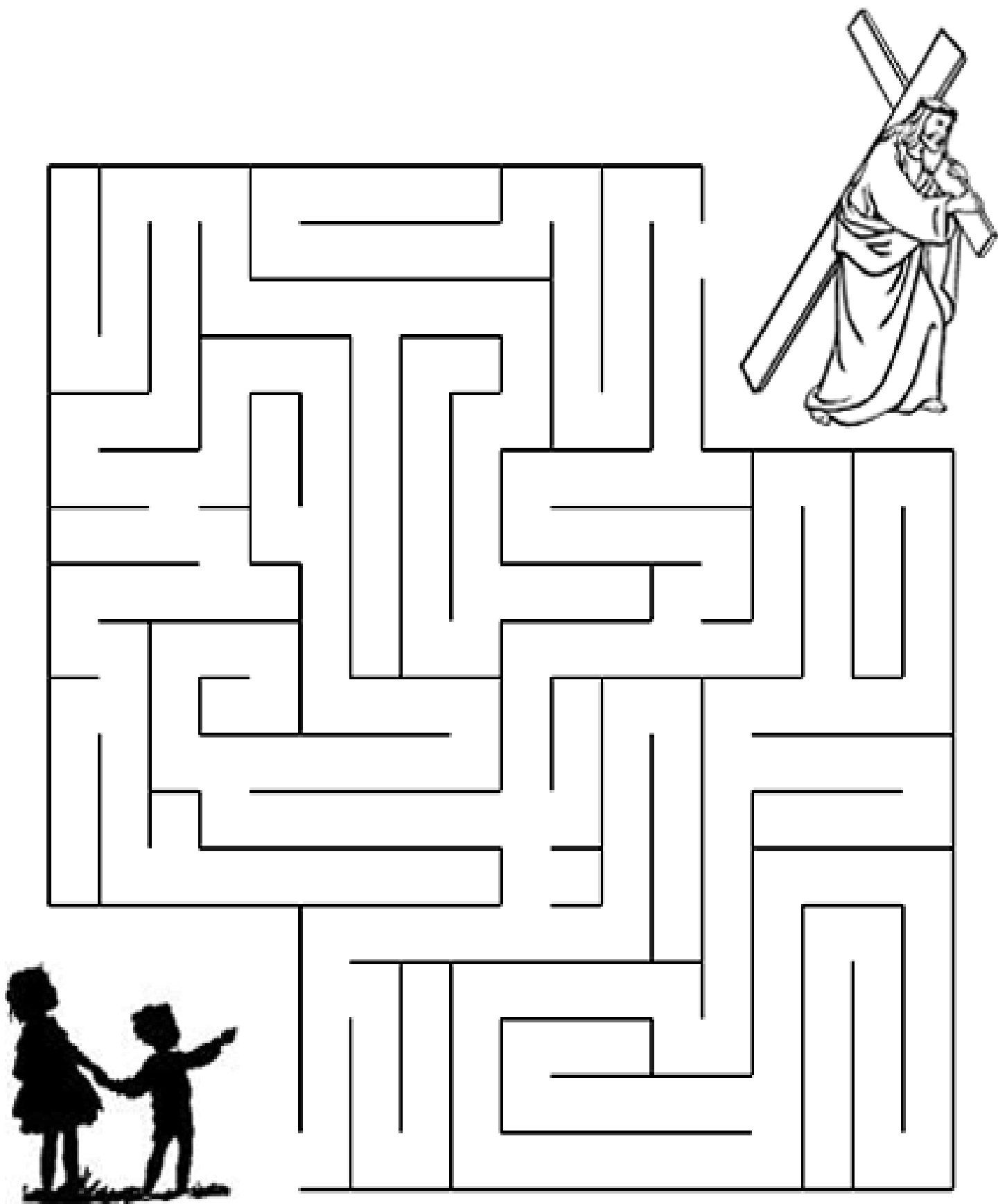
How do we sometimes confuse the true essence of faith and discipleship with worldly success and recognition? What steps can we take to better align our understanding with the teachings of Jesus and his message of selflessness and humility?



The Potter's House



I will follow Jesus, our leader.



"If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."
Mark 8:34

Take Up Your Cross

What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? Mark 8:36

Each number represents a letter of the alphabet.
Substitute the correct letter for the numbers to reveal the coded words.



K	G	W	O	I	V	H	C	Y	E	D	F	T	P	Q	B	L	Z	M	J	X	U	N	A	S	R
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

- 11-10-23-9 _____
- 8-26-4-25-25 _____
- 12-4-17-17-4-3 _____
- 25-24-6-10 _____
- 17-5-12-10 _____
- 17-4-25-10 _____
- 2-24-5-23 _____
- 3-4-26-17-11 _____
- 12-4-26-12-10-5-13 _____
- 25-4-22-17 _____

LIFE	FORFEIT	CROSS	DENY	LOSE
SAVE	WORLD	SOUL	FOLLOW	GAIN