Devotional Reflection, Tuesday, July 28, 2026
Proper 12, the week of the ninth Sunday after Pentecost
The Rev. David W. Perkins, Th.D.

Carrying Jesus' Cross With Him

Key phrases for reflection from today's reading:
32As they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene named Simon; they compelled this man to carry his cross.

You will find the full text of today's Gospel at the end of this reflection.

Daily Office Lectionary Readings (*BCP*, 977)
AM Psalm 61, 62; PM Psalm 68:1-20(21-23)24-36
Judges 2:1-5,11-23; Rom. 16:17-27; Matt. 27:32-44

Today we celebrate the Feast of Johann Sebastian Bach. (See below.)

David's Reflections

William James Huntington, whose feast we celebrated yesterday, wrote the Collect for Fridays for Morning Prayer in our Prayer Book; it first appeared in the 1892 revision of *The Book of Common Prayer*. We also pray this collect on Palm Sunday. "Almighty God, whose dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: Mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; through Son Jesus Christ, your Son our Lord. ***Amen.***" (BCP, pp. 99, 272)

That phrase, "walking the way of the cross," seems especially relevant in relation to today's Gospel. Simon of Cyrene was not given a choice on that day. Any Roman soldier could compel a citizen to bear a burden one mile, hence Jesus' teaching in The Sermon on the Mount about going the second mile with that soldier, voluntarily carrying the burden he had forced on you. That day Simon bore Jesus' cross for him. In Huntington's words, he was "walking in the way of the cross."

If certain people resent our faith or distance themselves from us because they are uncomfortable with our faith, we are "walking in the way of the cross," sharing Christ's rejection and alienation. We may have very little choice in that matter. Practicing our faith can create the distance and alienation.

Are we willing to maintain our identity and to continue living by our core values, even in the face of a negative reaction on the part of some? It is in maintaining our obedience and taking the risks involved that we find the deep inner joy and peace of which this collect speaks. We know that we are being faithful to Christ, that we are not abandoning him to suffer this rejection without us. Any rejection we experience, he also does. To abandon him leaves him without our Simon-like companionship and presence. To bear his cross of rejection means to bear it with him and for him as did Simon and to walk the way of the cross with him as did Simon.

Note that Simon bore the cross *of* Jesus, he bore the cross *for* Jesus, and he bore the cross *with* Jesus. Our faithfulness may well mean all three of those experiences. What encourages me most? The Idea that I am bearing the cross *with* Jesus; he does not leave me alone in my moments of rejection. We bear the cross together.

Collect of the Day, Proper 12, the ninth Sunday after Pentecost
O God, the protector of all who trust in you, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy: Increase and multiply upon us your mercy; that, with you as our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we lose not the things eternal; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen*. (BCP, 231)

Today we celebrate the Feast of Johann Sebastian Bach, composer (died 28 July 1750 CE).
http://satucket.com/lectionary/bach_handel_purcell.htm
https://www.britannica.com/biography/Johann-Sebastian-Bach

Collect of the Feast of Johann Sebastian Bach
Sound out your majesty, O God, and call us to your work; that, like your servant Johann Sebastian Bach, we might present our lives and our works to your glory alone;

through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

For the Church
Give to your Church, O God,
a bold vision and a daring charity,
a refreshed wisdom and a courteous understanding,
that the eternal message of your Son
may be acclaimed as the good news of the age;
through him who makes all things new,
even Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
(This Franciscan-inspired prayer was offered by our chaplains during this meeting of the House of Bishops.. House of Bishops, ECUSA, March 2008
http://www.episcopalchurch.org/79901_95614_ENG_HTM.htm

In the Order of Worship for Evening
Blessed are you, O Lord, the God of our fathers, creator of the changes of day and night, giving rest to the weary, renewing the strength of those who are spent, bestowing upon us occasions of song in the evening. As you have protected us in the day that is past, so be with us in the coming night; keep us from every sin, every evil, and every fear; for you are our light and salvation, and the strength of our life. To you be glory for endless ages. *Amen*. (BCP, 113)

A Collect for Mission
Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of your faithful people is governed and sanctified: Receive our supplications and prayers which we offer before you for all members of your holy Church, that in their vocation and ministry they may truly and devoutly serve you; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. *Amen.* (BCP, 100)

Daily Offices in the Book of Common Prayer
Morning Prayer, Rite 2, page 75, *The Book of Common Prayer*
Noonday Prayer, page 103, *Book of Common Prayer*
Order of Worship for Evening (Vespers), p 109, *Book of Common Prayer*
Evening Prayer, Rite 2, page 115, *Book of Common Prayer*
Compline (Night Prayer), page 127, *Book of Common Prayer*

Daily Devotionals, page 136, *Book of Common Prayer*