

**Movement and Flow**      Sixth Week in Ordinary Time      Friday, February 17, 2017  
8:15 AM    Gn 11:1-9;    **Mk 8:34—9:1**    (The Seven Holy Founders of the Servite Order)  
(Who we are, who we have become is not the purpose of life.)

**“Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.”**

This short little sentence contains **the entire mission of Christ**, but it has been often trivialized, if I daresay. Taking up one’s cross has been made to be equitant to, for example, enduring suffering, which it may entail, but it’s not the same thing. Even the term “self-denial” is often a matter of doing penance, giving up chocolate or meat or snacks or something else. But he is not talking about that type of self-denial. He is not talking about doing painful things or enduring suffering without complaining, all of which might be really good, but that’s not what he is talking about. This is all connected to the next sentence: “For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it.” **So when he is talking about denying himself, he is talking about letting go of one’s life as we find it so that we can find something else.**

I admit this is perhaps a little confusing, but everybody on earth has a certain sense of who he or she is, and that is a product of his or her experience—all well and good. The point is that isn’t really the end all and the be all and the purpose of life. That’s the key. **Who we are, who we have become is not the purpose of life.** The purpose of life is something more, but in order to get more we have to let go of what we have. You might want to use the crude example of a ladder: in order to reach the top of a ladder, you have to leave the lower rungs. So it is also with acquiring the life God wants for us. **We have to let go of what happens in the life we have,** which may be, by the way, very comfortable, and we may be very happy with it. Some people even like clinging to their suffering because at least they’re familiar with their sufferings.

So this is about growth and it’s about identity. It’s about realizing **we do not really know who we are created to be yet.** It’s about realizing that only God can really inform us, and that **God informs us by letting us taste who God is,** since we are made in God’s image and likeness. It’s also a clear statement that we cannot be always defending who we are, what we have, what we believe. That’s a certain recipe for getting stuck. **With God there is nothing but movement and flow. And if we want to find out who God intends us to be, we have to get with it—the movement and the flow.**