



## St. John Fisher Whole Community Project

*Liturgical Preparation Ministry continue with this community project. We posed our third question (in September 2012) to see what you have to say.*

*On the 24th Sunday of Ordinary Time, the scriptures were about God's presence at the side of the Servant, shielding the Servant from shame, James prompts his community to show the depth of their faith through their good works, and as Jesus lives out his salvific mission, he conveys to all who seek to follow, what the cost of discipleship will require.*

### **How do you make friends with suffering?**

*The servant is not a victim, woeful and bereft, but a believer, full of the confidence and hope that makes it possible to confront even the greatest challenge.*

## How do you make friends with suffering:

**Age group: 36 - 50+**

✿ In order to accomplish this important aspect of our spiritual journey and quest to be more like Christ one needs to have an “emptying and dying of oneself.” Although not in the literal sense, the dying of oneself calls us to allow the hand of God to guide us and move through us by putting our own human desires and ambitions aside and allow the Gospel message to come alive through us.

✿ How to empty and die to oneself. – By reallocating our time to help another person who was not on our “to-do” list for the day

✿ How to empty and die to oneself. – By truly listening to others and suppressing the desire to always be heard

✿ How to empty and die to oneself. – By living in the moment and releasing our anxieties and expectations of ourselves and others. In this way, we can hear the direction that God is asking us to follow with our goal being to do God's will and not our own.

✿ How to empty and die to oneself. – By asking ourselves each morning: How can I be the hands, the feet, the eyes, the mouth, and the ears of God today for others?

✿ How to empty and die to oneself. – To hear with our hearts

✿ I find when I am in a challenging time, I try to look outside the box and see what I am supposed to learn or how should I change. It keeps me from feeling sorry for myself or getting depressed.

✿ Focus on the Mission – it is about other-others – like spouses, parents – the other/others in particular – family, etc. Humanity – each of us need to have other/others truly as part of the family – emptying oneself though requires suffering – letting go of me allows me to focus on other/others.

✿ When I see suffering in the world, I try to do something, anything, to help alleviate it. I try to target specific causes that touch my heart. I also try to remember that whatever I give of my time, talent, or treasure, even if it is something small, it will help.

✿ To make friends with suffering, is an ability to see through the lens of that suffering the needs of those around me, whether friend or stranger, the capacity to examine with compassion and perception what that friend or stranger is experiencing and be able to walk the path with them.

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✿ I think suffering is a means to an end – a necessary step in the process of dying to the self – to be reborn into a different mindset. As a parent, it's difficult to watch my kids enter into the pains of break-ups and disappointments but ... I patiently stand by them and watch as they move through tough times and then ... watch them blossom as they are forced to find the strength of love and compassion that resides deep inside, to see them through.

✿ When life gets tough, prayer is the first place I go. Sometimes I get angry with God, but then I make my peace and look to God for strength, understanding, and hope. Knowing that everyone suffers throughout their lives helps me to know that I am not alone, that there are many who understand and will support me. And there is much to learn from suffering.

✿ To make friends with suffering one must center themselves in the illness and belief that God will help us in our struggle.

**Note:**

As we begin to form and refine this Whole Community Project, we have been asking select groups to contribute. We will continue to seek and encourage more of the community to share their thoughts as we progress.

Eventually responses will be posted to the community using various print and electronic media as well as an ongoing series of artwork collages inspired by your responses. These will be out by Mid-October.

Thank You!