

# The Rev. Jay Lawlor urges congregation to “take up the cross of love” in his sermon on Sep. 3, 2017

*The Rev. Jay Lawlor preached the 13th Sunday After Pentecost, Year A, Sep. 3, 2017 at Holy Family Episcopal Church in Fishers, Indiana.*

INDIANAPOLIS, IN, US, February 12, 2018 /EINPresswire.com/ -- preached [the Rev. Jay Lawlor](#) in his sermon titled "[Take up the Cross of Love](#)." The Rev. Lawlor delivered the sermon on the 13th Sunday After Pentecost Year A, September 3, 2017 at Holy Family Episcopal Church in Fishers, Indiana. A video recording of the Rev. Lawlor's sermon has been posted by Holy Family Productions and on the Rev. Jay Lawlor's website. Following are excerpts from the sermon transcript:



The Rev. Jay Lawlor preaching on 13th Sunday After Pentecost Proper 17 Year A, September 3, 2017 at Holy Family Episcopal Church in Fishers, IN.

This past July the Episcopal Youth Event – EYE as it is more commonly known – was held in Oklahoma. Every three years the Episcopal Church convenes EYE to celebrate and energize the active participation of youth in ministry as members of the Body of Christ throughout the Episcopal Church. It is the second largest gathering of Episcopalians behind General Convention. And it is an amazing, energetic, inspiring time of worship, reflection, fellowship, and mission. I served as a leader for the youth delegation from the Diocese of Massachusetts in 1999 when EYE was hosted by this diocese at Indiana State University.

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When we take up our crosses we are acknowledging that God hears the cries of God's people and that we are answering God's call to live in justice, peace, and love.”

*The Rev. Jay Lawlor*

The Presiding Bishop gave an incredible sermon at EYE 2017's opening Eucharist this past July. I watched it online

and you can check out the video. In the sermon, the PB said: “If you want to change the world, follow Jesus.” It's a short, but powerful, statement. Because following Jesus means taking up our crosses – which is to go where God hears the cries of God's people and change the world more into God's vision for creation.

And God has a history of calling upon people of faith to be God's agents of change in the world. In fact, it is how God enacts change in the world. Take Moses, for example, he's walking along and Exodus tells us: God called to him out of the bush, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.” (Exodus 3:4b) A few verses later, Exodus continues:

Then the Lord said, “I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry

on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians (Exodus 3:7-8a)

And we know the story. God delivers the Israelites from Egypt through Moses. God chooses Moses to lead them out of bondage and oppression.

Leading Old Testament scholar Walter Brueggemann comments that Moses, while at first unsure he is up to the task, becomes a willing participant and a legitimate partner with God. Because of this, vocation is assigned to Moses for the sake of the Israelites. Moses' personal encounter with God is not for his own sake, it is for the sake of the community – as it was for Abraham. As it was for Jesus. As was and is for those who follow Jesus.

Our call from God may not be in the form of something as dramatic or obvious as a burning bush, but all we need to do is look at the world and know God is surely calling to us. God hears the cries of those who are oppressed, vulnerable, lonely, sick, or suffering with injustice, and God calls upon agents of change to transform the world. It is throughout Scripture – both the Hebrew Scripture (our Old Testament) and the Christian Scripture (our New Testament).

So, in the words of our Presiding Bishop, “If you want to change the world, follow Jesus.” For Christians today, it is about taking up the cross which leads us to proclaim the Gospel, and promote justice, peace, and love. And the Gospel – the Good News – is that God is love and God's love redeems us through Christ. It is a love which knows no limits, no exceptions. And out of this love we learn to become the community God intends us to be.

This Jesus Movement we are all a part of is transforming. Not just for us, but for the world. If we are willing to follow Jesus. If we are willing to follow Jesus even to those places we may not want to go, to be with those we may not want to be with, to take risks for the sake of the Gospel when it is easier to play it safe. To take up our crosses. Matthew's Gospel today is all about taking up our crosses.

The entire sermon can be viewed at <https://www.therevjaylawlor.com/takeupthecrossoflove-sermon-therevjaylawlor-09032017/>

Visit [Sermons Video Series](#) page on the Rev. Jay Lawlor's website for all six of the sermons the Rev. Lawlor preached at Holy Family.

The Rev. Jay Lawlor  
The Rev. Jay Lawlor  
317-296-3852  
email us here

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