

[Spirituality](#)

[Pencil Preaching](#)



by Pat Marrin

[View Author Profile](#)

[patrickjmarrin@gmail.com](mailto:patrickjmarrin@gmail.com).

## [\*\*Join the Conversation\*\*](#)

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. [Learn more](#)

August 8, 2019

[Share on Facebook](#)[Share on Twitter](#)[Email to a friend](#)[Print](#)



“What profit would there be for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life?”  
(Matt 16:26).

When Jesus encountered Satan in the desert, he turned down the offer to have the whole world in exchange for himself. Satan even went to the trouble of showing Jesus all the kingdoms of the earth (which already belonged to God, so he was both a con and a liar). Jesus, who went to the desert to be stripped of all illusion and false pride, had already surrendered his life to God’s will. He was not about gaining anything, but losing everything in God’s service.

So it is no surprise to find the theme of self-surrender at the heart of discipleship. Jesus says on several occasions that if someone wants to save his life he will lose it, and those who lose their lives for his sake will find their lives. Giving yourself away is the key to traveling light in the company of Jesus, who was food for the hungry, health for the sick, freedom for the possessed and life for the dying. When he cried his last word from the cross, “Finished,” Jesus was emptying himself into us.

Today's liturgy commemorates St. Edith Stein (Teresa Benedicta of the Cross), who found her life in union with Jesus, her brother Jew, by joining the Carmelites, and she shared his death in solidarity with the victims of the Holocaust. She lost everything in this world to gain everything in eternity. Her contemplative search for love uncovered the radical profit/loss ratio Jesus inspired from the cross.

Giving yourself away is not a once for all moment but an everyday decision to be available to the needs of others. Parents know this. Teachers and pastors and nurses know this. The habits of a generous heart turn life into a rhythm of breathing in and breathing out, prayer and service, finding and sharing love in every circumstance. To take up your cross is to stand in the crossroads of life, where every encounter has divine potential and human costs.

Blessed are those who find this path by losing themselves in love. This is the joy of the Gospel.

Advertisement