

We all have crosses in our lives. I know I do. It's what we do with them that matters. Are we going to let them help us become the saints we're called to be? Or are we going to let them bring us down?

In professional sports, I read about athletes feeling disrespected by television commentators or even fans who don't vote them into the All Star game. Or not getting television coverage for their games. The good athletes use this as motivation and you see a lot of stories of them playing much better because of the perceived lack of respect.

In the Catholic church, we see blessings coming out of the times in persecution. The martyrs first come to mind during the times of persecution and they're the "seeds" for the growth of the church.

For me, I'd hope and pray that I'm channeling my own personal crosses for the better as I had recently started emailing/posting these personal prayer reflections, started taking singing lessons with not just one but two teachers to help with opening songs for Faith Fest, doing the youth group video for Faith Fest, giving the Confirmation retreat a bit more Holy Spirit punch, etc.

As Catholics, we're supposed to work out our salvation with "fear and trembling." We're not supposed to be anxious or scrupulous, but we should also not be overconfident or presumptuous. As St. Ignatius of Loyola said, let's "work as if it all depends on us, and pray as if it all depends on God."