

Meet a long-time friend: Giggles the Clown. Giggles “hangs out” in my front office. He’s been with me for many, many years. Giggles is a good clown; a fun clown; a wonderful clown. He helps people see the positive; he makes people laugh; he has a wonderful smile.

As you might suspect, Giggles has “bad-hair days”. Sometimes he gets up on the wrong side of the bed. Some nights he has restless sleep or gets very little sleep. He can be quite moody until he has his first cup of coffee in the morning.

And then there are days he doesn’t FEEL like being a clown. He doesn’t FEEL like making people laugh. He doesn’t want to SMILE. Some days he has no interest in dressing up like a clown. He would prefer to simply wear shorts and a baseball cap. Such is a glimpse into the life of Giggles the Clown.

In our Gospel today Jesus says: “Take up your cross daily and follow me.”

Like Giggles, we have a cross to carry. Our cross is whatever life sends our way each day. It may involve health issues. It may be connected to family, friend, neighbor or work relationships.

It may be our job or the lack of a meaningful one in which we can make a decent living.

It may be deeply personal and private issues we carry within our hearts and souls.

Whatever our cross is, we are never free from its burden.

So the first part of Jesus’ invitation is to take up our cross daily.

The 2nd part of Jesus’ saying is: “Follow me.” For Giggles the Clown that might mean acting like a clown in spite of how he feels: Doing his best to make people laugh; to be energetic and goofy; to smile; to poke fun at himself.

For us that might mean dealing with each day as best we can. How? To be kind, considerate and thoughtful; we seek to be respectful, appreciative and express gratitude. It means forgiving, exercising patience and accepting others in spite of how we might feel. We will be more faithful some days than on other days.

Life is difficult. It isn’t easy for anyone. Giggles has his challenges; we have ours. This week daily be aware of the cross that life sends us. Be like Jesus as best we can.

My sisters and brothers, God blesses our efforts. God is with us in our struggles. Receive this GOOD NEWS!