

What does it mean to become a Cyrenian? (Fr. Andreas Agathokleous)

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No one has gone through life without ever being worried, hurt, or driven to tears. As children of Adam, all of us, young and old, have to live with the consequences of the fall of our forefather, precisely because that forefather is each one of us. There's no need to find support for this view of the human condition, since life itself is evidence of the difficulty, the trials and the cross which accompany all of us on our path through it.



This is why all of us need support, a shoulder to lean on, a kind word to sustain us at a time when it seems impossible for us to bear our cross. Christ himself needed a Cyrenian [Simon from Cyrene], even though he became, and is now, a support for all of us, a true brother, father and friend, that is 'all things to all people'.

Of course, you can't be a 'Cyrenian', if you try to advise those in difficulties with words you don't believe, with admonitions that you'd never apply to yourself. What results from your efforts may have fallout. You can overturn a theory, but not life.

* How will you urge someone else to have patience, when you didn't show it in your own trial and so know nothing of the difficulty involved, nor the results?

* How will you talk about faith in God when you didn't trust his silence?

* How will you refer to hope when you know nothing of patience and life-giving faith?

In the end, to become a real support and helper in the tribulations of others, you need to love 'as he loved us'. Because his love, that of Christ, isn't mere words with no repercussions. His incarnation and crucifixion are the supreme expressions of

his practical love.



However, you can't understand them if, in your life, you haven't felt them personally. In other words, if you haven't felt that Christ loves you as you are, accepts you and invites you into his life. And that this, basically, is why he became human, was crucified and rose.

Pain-companionship-the love of God: all intermingled with the beauty of life- of his life- and all going to show that we are one. And the most significant thing is that what's important aren't the various trials of this impermanent, transitory world, but Christ who overcame death by death, pain by acceptance of it and the cross by shouldering it.

It seems that those who want Christ as the beginning and end of their life, who strive to love him practically by observing his commandments, who, in the course of the struggle, fall and rise again without complaint, can provide support for their brothers and sisters in need and can give them hope and strength, drawing these from their Lord and God.

Such people really do become signs which indicate the presence of God among us, which is why they radiate joy and peace. His own joy and peace.