

Take up your cross

If anyone would come after me,
Let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

Recently there was a small documentary on TV focusing on the training of the athlete Kealey Hodkinson.

The glory of that programme was that it did not focus upon the end result. It was not focused purely upon the last few meters of the many prestigious races that this women has won. No we found ourselves watching a day of training. There was struggle, and real pain. There was the loneliness of pushing boundaries without the support of an adoring crowd. There was cold and vomit and disappointment and determination.

In order to achieve this athlete was prepared to take on the struggle. In order to compete this women was prepared to take up her cross.

If it is worth winning it is worth losing.
If it is worth achieving, it is worth the fight

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Let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

A wonderful aspect of Roman Catholic marriage is the commitment to permanence. A commitment to recognising that both parties in this arrangement are flawed human beings. Romantic notions of blissful perfection are more often destroyed by exhaustion, frustration, and financial hardship.

How can anyone think that married life can avoid the disappointment of our imperfections?

The person you lie to the most in life is yourself
The person you cannot usually deceive is your partner
The consequence is that beautiful as it is the marriage relationship is
It will inevitably involve struggle
This struggle does not legitimise abuse

For as a partnership, and on occasion individually, the problems must be faced and dealt with

If anyone would come after me,
Let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

Even within my own heart
Within my own private soul
There is inevitably struggle
This can be decisions which need to be made
Situations which will develop even if I avoid the choice
This can be mental fragility
Fear which inhibits actions, and blurs vision
This can be learned patterns of behaviour which should be confronted
As body rebels with illness, or relationships suffer.
Our faith demands honesty
Then with the strength of humility

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Our faith more often than not
is basic common sense