

## DYING TO LIVE

Daily, we die to live. In this circumstance, dying entails giving up something for the sake of a higher good. We prioritize worshipping God and that is why we gave up something else we would have been doing now to worship God. We died to what we gave up to worship God in the church now. Some people do not like the work they do but they give up doing what they want or pleasing themselves to earn a living with their jobs. For a marriage to be successful one or both partners must give up pleasing themselves at some moments to please the other. During priestly ordination, priests die to their selfish interests to embrace Jesus' interest which is also the Church's interest. Likewise, in our baptism, we die to our selfish inclinations to uphold or hold onto God's will. The beauty of the trees in the summer season lies in the shedding and death of leaves in the fall season. The leaves die in the fall season to give room for the new ones to grow in the summer. The beauty of us human beings created in God's image lies in the death of our selfish desires and in living the life of love as Jesus taught us. In today's Gospel reading (John 12:20-33), Jesus emphasized the fact that a grain of wheat must die to produce many grains of wheat, if not it will remain a single grain of wheat. Jesus died for the sake of our salvation. Today's Gospel reading explains why Jesus must die. As a single grain of wheat must die to produce many grains of wheat, Jesus must die for the salvation of many. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the One "who gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father (Galatians 1:4). Some people have given up their lives for the welfare of their countries. The bird, the pelican, feeds her children with her blood. For her children to survive and grow, a pelican must die by feeding her babies with her blood. WE MUST DIE TO SOMETHING FOR SOMETHING GREATER. According to St. John Vianney, "Here is a rule for everyday life: do not do anything which you cannot offer to God." What are the things we do that we cannot be proud to offer to God? We need to die to bad habits or inclinations and sins in this earthly life. Pride, which we need to get rid of in our lives, is a major obstacle to eternal life. Humility makes us accept who we are and seek help from God our source or fount of help. According to Archbishop Fulton Sheen, "The worst thing on earth is not sin but denial of sin." NO ONE ON EARTH IS PERFECT. We need to refrain from seeing ourselves as better than others. This act makes one condemn others and hinders one from trying to improve. Most of us want to please God with our lives but human weaknesses and selfish desires or inclinations are preventing us from achieving our goals. Some people are struggling to die to the desires, habits, or deeds that displease God. We need to encourage each other. It is not humanly easy to overcome long-time acquired habits or to resist some ungodly desires in our present world. THE CHURCH IS THE BEST PLACE TO GET ENCOURAGEMENT AND SUPPORT IN OUR STRUGGLES TO PLEASE GOD. In our Gospel reading last weekend (John 3:14-21), Jesus pointed out that He did not come to the world to condemn the world but to save the world most especially those who believe in Him. Anyone who comes freely to the church, to some extent, believes in Jesus Christ. JESUS HELPS US TO DIE TO SIN AND RAISES US TO LIVE A NEW LIFE. The new life is Christ-like life. Many people have tried to overcome some bad habits or quit sinning by their power and failed. Christian life is a life of a continuous struggle to please God with His grace. Sometimes, we can fail or succeed in our struggles to overcome bad habits or quit sinning. Please let our failures not discourage us, rather let our failures urge us to intensify our efforts and make us seek help from God. OUR

FELLOW CHRISTIANS ALL OVER THE WORLD ARE STRUGGLING TO PLEASE GOD FOR THE SAKE OF ETERNAL LIFE. May God help us in our struggles to please Him, be pleased with our little efforts to please Him, and reward us with eternal life, Amen.