

# 15 Sharing Your Story: The Communality of the Cross

The sharing of our stories is the highlight of the community of the cross. For this reason, it might be most fulfilling to begin your cross-making practice together in a group with others. One of my workshop participants once compared the sharing of our stories to the practice of sharing about *lectio divina*, where members of a group will share what the Holy Spirit has revealed to them about a particular passage of Scripture.

The father of your storytelling is Jesus: "He told them many things in parables" (Mt. 13:3). "Once there was a man," "A sower went out to sow," "The Kingdom of heaven is like," "A man planted a vineyard." As you tell your story to others, you will be stepping into a long, honorable line of Christian tradition.

Don't be afraid of sharing the story of your cross. It can be intimidating because, if you are honest in your cross making, you will reveal yourself. As you tell the story of your cross, those listening will know what you believe; or at least what you believed at the moment you were creating the cross. They will come to know something about how you feel about your relationship with Christ. What, you might wonder, if I say something that's not quite right? What if my thoughts do not toe the church party line? What if they shake their heads and "tsk, tsk" at me?

In response to our fears, we tend to clam up, taking to heart the advice that it is better to stay silent and appear stupid than to open our mouths and remove all doubt.

But we can't remove all doubt, can we? Step out, and share with others. To make this easier, a good idea is for the group to make a promise to each other that everyone will be heard openly and honestly, without judgment.

No matter how close we come to God in this life, we won't know all of the answers to our questions until we arrive in the next life and finally know. The best we can do is to grope at the glass darkly. I say, "This is the way I see it." And you say, "What about this?" Together, in his name, we approach a place that isn't quite where we were before.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if this willingness to share our stories of God moved beyond our small groups? Maybe it could even catch on. I've already seen groups of people begin to get excited about this new, strange cross-making activity and all of the ideas and emotions that it can generate in people. "It's green, environmentally conscious," some say; others claim it to be the most traditional of practices: taking up our cross. Jesus said, "Anyone who wants to be a follower of mine must renounce self; he must take up his cross and follow me" (Mk. 8:34).

*Let's  
prepare ourselves to  
engage in a new,  
different,  
artistic practice.*



Under the umbrella of inclusivity, folks across the country walk with head bent, intent on God's creation, collecting what they once ignored. Crosses of all shapes and sizes begin to emerge: tiny crosses thin as needles, gargantuan crosses lumbering as Godzilla, bread crosses made by bakers, knitted crosses made by knitters, crosses tied with old fishing lures (the "Fishers of Men" cross), crosses quilted by quilters (the "Blessed are the Piecemakers" cross). Each of these crosses has a profound meaning, a way of representing what it means for a particular person to be a child of God. In small groups, inside homes, in the unknown rooms of our hearts, we work on our crosses, rejecting rampant materialism and the monied standards of value and the inexorable panting after more and more. Standing at the crossroads, we choose the path of the cross, and follow into a community of crosses where the people, like the crosses, are all shapes and sizes, hues and complexions. No one talks politics, no one draws lines in the sand, only lines on the cross—wavery, uncertain, very important lines.

I know I have my weaknesses: I buy too many shoes, I fall in love with vintage earrings, I question whether under any circumstances I could voluntarily relinquish my yard—the house, maybe, but the yard? Time and time again, I fall miserably short of where God wants me to be. But in all my brokenness, in my struggling to be found, in my yearning toward God, I am trying to make a cross.

You, too, are trying to make a cross. Together, we will build our crosses, we will share with each other what God means in our lives. And God, in the infinite wisdom that belongs to the Divine, will smile at our handmade, broken, inept gifts of glory.



## Exercise

Who will your group of cross makers be? Your Sunday school group? Your neighborhood block group? Your women friends who meet once a month to sip a glass of wine and share time? Your Bible study group? The group at the funky bookstore down the road? Look around you and begin to form your cross making group.

