

Catherine Marshall was a well-known author and the wife of the Chaplain of the US Senate. At one point in her life she was suffering from a lung infection and was bedfast for 6 months. No amount of prayer or medicine helped. She became terribly depressed.

One day someone gave her a pamphlet about a woman missionary who had contracted a strange disease. She had been sick for 8 years and couldn't understand why God let this horrible disease persist. She prayed daily for health. Her prayers got no answer.

One day she cried out to God, "All right. I give up. If you want me to be an invalid that's your business." Within 2 weeks she was fully recovered.

Catherine Marshall laid the pamphlet aside. She was puzzled by the strange story. It didn't make sense. Yet she couldn't forget the story.

One morning Catherine cried out to God in words similar to the missionary, "God I'm tired of asking you for health. You decide if you want me sick or healthy."

Catherine said later that at that moment her health began to return.

Surely you remember the prayer of Jesus spoken by Him in the Garden of Gethsemane during His agony, "Father if it be possible let this suffering pass from me. Yet your will not my will be done."

Today's Gospel brings us to the very heart of Jesus' teaching, "Whoever loves his life loses it, and however hates his life in this world will preserve it for eternal life." Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies it produces much fruit."

Something about us must die, but what is it? It's our own self-centeredness, our self-will, our need to be in control. Actually self-centeredness destroys our happiness, destroys our joy, even our creativity. The opposite of self will is trust; trust in the presence, the love of God in our lives, trust in the love God has for us, for you, for me, always; the love that Jesus shows us so strongly by pouring out His life on the cross.

The monk Thomas Merton expressed the spiritual journey to which we are all invited by God in this way: Within each of us is our true self and our false self. My true self is who I am in God. My false self is myself who wants to exist outside the reach of

God's will and God's love. Our false self, my false creates tons of anxiety, fear and division.

Remember what Jesus teaches, "Fear is useless, what is needed now is trust."

"Unless the grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies it remains just a grain of wheat. But if it dies it produces much fruit."

And so it is in our lives, we die to self in order to live for God.