

## This “Glorious Season” of Lent

John goes out of his way to let us know that Jesus was not a victim caught up in the strong will of Rome or the debauchery of the Jewish religious hierarchy. Jesus was, from his betrayal, denial, flogging and crucifixion, always in control. He was the Good Shepherd whose life was never taken, but was laid down of His own accord. The way of the cross is the Groom willfully and lovingly coming down the aisle to His Bride, the Church. As a seminary professor was fond of saying, “this was not a shotgun wedding!”

In John’s Gospel, we miss some of the physical agony of this walk to the cross. There is no mention of the sweating of blood in Gethsemane and other gruesome physical details are left out. John, whose heart was particularly close to His Lord, wants us to know that as awful as the physical pain of those days was for our Lord, it was nothing in comparison to the spiritual pain of the separation of the Son from His Father. The Word which had been in perfect harmony and unity with the Father before time began, is now to be separated by our sin which He never knew. It is this pain of loss and separation from the Holy Father, as the Son takes on the sins of the world—ours—past, present and future—that deserves our real attention and gratitude.

Then there is that recurring word of glory, which particularly surfaces in these latter chapters of our Lord’s passion; so what is glorious about this time? John, who, compared to the other Gospel writers, seems to have a monopoly on the understanding of love, wants us to know that behind every step to the Cross is a heartbeat of our Savior’s love. When Jesus “sets His face” to Jerusalem it is you and me He is really focused on. It is perhaps those who have lost loved ones and have been at their bedside in those difficult hours that know His love best. The love and compassion given by them is not done begrudgingly or with hesitation. But rather, it is done in a love that has its own special glory that appears in those last tender moments. So it is with our Lord; it is not His obligation or duty to go to the cross, as much as His loving joy and glory. No one else could do it and He would not want anyone else to.

It is the Groom gloriously making His way down the aisle to literally rescue and save His Bride (us), The Church. John wants to make sure that in the blood and sweat of the cross we do not hear so much a heavy sigh with the thought that, “some one has to do this for these sinners” as much as a smile and an unrelenting drive forward, as Hebrews 12:12 says, because of “the joy that was set before Him.” Whenever and however we begin to realize that you and I are that very joy that was set before Him, is when the cross makes life changing sense.

His love for us would never let us go and it is that great love that captures our hearts and will never let us let go of Him. It is that love that makes us say with the hymnist, Bernard Clairvaux, “what language shall I borrow to thank thee dearest friend, for this Thy dying sorrow, Thy pity without end? O make me thine Forever and should I fainting be, Lord, let me never, never, outlive my love for Thee.”

It is on the cross where the Groom Jesus  
Lets His Bride, the Church, know that  
He would rather die than live without us.