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The Danish theologian, Soren Kierkegaard, wrote about a wealthy woman who felt God was calling her to the convent. She felt she had to give up everything in order to do this, with one exception: she owned a small garden which meant the world to her. It was a place where she could be alone and at peace. She could give up everything else but not relinquish the key to this secret garden.

There was no secret garden for Jesus except the garden of Gethsemane. It was there where he sweated blood before His sacred Passion. Resolutely taking the road to Jerusalem is a symbolic way of saying that Jesus had chosen the Way of the Cross. There was no going back. Part of the Cross was His rejection by the Samaritans. They and the Jews did not see eye to eye and in making for Jerusalem he seemed to be giving them the cold shoulder. In consequence Peter and John suggested that God should instantly punish the Samaritans by raining down fire from Heaven on them. But Jesus rebuked the apostles and insisted this was not God's way of resolving conflict. This is not the way of the Cross.

Perhaps, as a result of the recent referendum, those on different sides should try and avoid recriminations against each other. I think people mostly voted Brexit because their national identity especially in rural areas and smaller towns seems progressively threatened as a result of unbridled immigration which has been mostly ignored by politicians despite the fact that pledges to curb immigration were made in their manifestos. The immigrants are only doing what the EU treaties allows them to do.

In our following of Jesus we also need to be careful about making outlandish promises to Our Lord and not having the wherewithal to deliver. One man said: 'I will follow you wherever you go'. Jesus, however, knew the man 'was biting off more than he could chew'. Do we sometimes promise Jesus

the earth but it turns out to be 'all talk with very little substance'.

The second man who was called by Jesus said: 'Let me go and bury my Father first'. Jesus replied 'leave the dead to bury their dead' - meaning that the man's family was already spiritually wanting. Here the man couldn't rise above the demands of his spiritually defunct family. Following Jesus will often require us to stand back and be our own person in situations like this, despite family pressure. But it will also require us to stand up for what is right. Our family should not get in the way of that. Pope St John Paul 11 once said that "believing in Jesus means accepting what he says even when it runs contrary to what other people are saying" and that includes those of our own 'kith and kin'.

So as Jesus fixed his eyes resolutely on Jerusalem, we fix our eyes firmly on Him. We surrender to him the keys to our secret gardens. We will allow nothing or no one to come between us and our following of Him.