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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 him being snubbed by the Samaritans. The Samaritans and the Jews were often at loggerheads and when Jesus was making for Jerusalem, the Jewish capital, the Samaritans felt a bit peeved. In consequence Peter and John suggested that God should instantly rain down fire from Heaven on them. But Jesus rebuked the apostles and insisted this was not God's way of resolving conflict. This was not the way of the Cross but the way of the world.

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 froth and bubble' 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 moribund. Here the man couldn't rise above the expectations 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. 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 and allow nothing or no one to come between us and our following of Him.