

Gleaning In The Fields Of Light

By Ken Woodley

As we gather today for our church picnic—a sort of Homecoming at our St. Anne’s home—let’s not forget something. Once his public ministry began, Jesus never really had a home.

That’s how much Jesus loves us:

Foxes have their dens to call home.

But Jesus has none.

Birds of the air have nests to which they can fly.

But Jesus has nothing.

In his own words from the Gospel of Luke, Jesus tells us, “the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.”

But he could have. Anytime he wanted to, Jesus could have settled into his den, made himself comfortable in a nest, laid his head down in his own bed. Wrapped himself up in his own blankets.

He chose not to, however.

And that is how much Jesus loves us.

He left everything he could have had behind to tell us about the love of God.

That’s how much he loves us.

Jesus could have married. Could have had children. Could have lived a normal life. He could have contented himself with a devout and holy life for himself, going to synagogue like everyone else.

Instead, as Luke tells us, he set his face toward Jerusalem.

He set his face toward the Garden of Gethsemane instead of his own garden behind his own carpenter’s shop.

He set his face toward Pilate rather than pilot his own fishing boat on the Sea of Galilee.

Jesus set his face toward Golgotha.

He could have gone off in any other direction.

Jesus set his face toward the hammer and the nails.

He could have gone anywhere else.

Jesus set his face toward crucifixion.

Every other point of the compass offered him escape, but his face was set.

Why?

Because he set his face toward the only place he could find us.

That is the only place he could find you and me.

That is the only place he could find St. Anne's.

And that is the only way we'd ever find him.

Up until the very end, Jesus could have run off, walked off, pleaded off and saved his life.

Jesus could have gone off anywhere and begun a new life, a safe life, a devout life, a life with a wife and with children and a stable career, a life where he could wrap himself up in his own warm blankets.

Even Pilate gave him a chance to do so.

Had he done so, however, his mission, his ministry, the message and the meaning of his life would have been gone from the face of the Earth forever.

Instead, he set his face toward Jerusalem.

He set his face toward us.

He set his face toward you and me.

Jesus gave up what even the foxes and the birds take for granted, gave up every creature comfort, for you and me.

And so there is one thing we can do in return.

We can set our face toward *him*. We can invite Jesus into our own lives. Into our own homes. And not just the living room or front hallway. Invite him into every room in the house. Attics and basements, too.

And by that I mean every aspect of our lives, all that we are, warts and all.

Jesus knows us, warts and all, and loves us, warts and all.

So, yes, come live with us, Jesus.

Here is a comfortable bed, Lord.

Here are warm blankets for the Son of Man.

Wrap yourself up in them.

Sweet dreams, my Lord, and may all of them come true.

Because all of his dreams are set toward me and you.

And I'm believing we'll feel Jesus with us today as we break bread together at our sort of Homecoming.