



Unfailing Determination

3rd Thursday of Lent

They were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them; they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. He took the twelve aside again and began to tell them what was to happen to him, saying, 'See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death; then they will hand him over to the Gentiles; they will mock him, and spit upon him, and flog him, and kill him; and after three days he will rise again.'

Mark 10:32-34

Have you ever had the experience of watching someone you love persevere in an undertaking that has every prospect of utter catastrophe and be completely helpless to dissuade him from his intentions? One part of you may well be amazed by his or her tenacity, another part of you may also be quite afraid—afraid for him or her and afraid for yourself if, that is, your future is wrapped up in his or hers. Jesus had already warned the disciples of what lay before him (and them) in Jerusalem, but still he journeyed on undeterred in his determination to embrace what lay before him.

This is the third of the passion predictions on the way to Jerusalem and at the very end of each has been the assurance “and after three days he will rise again.” What the Twelve could not quite comprehend or did not want to comprehend was why he had to die in the first place? Why could he not be Messiah in a way they and everyone else anticipated? What a disappointment he would be if his predictions came true!

Jesus sometimes disappoints us as well. We expect one thing and experience another. We want him to make it easy for us, but doing as he commands sometimes makes things more difficult for us. I wonder sometimes why the Twelve continued to follow him, just as I wonder sometimes why we too continue to follow. Could it be that in spite of our misgivings and disappointments that somehow we also understand that it is only in and through and beyond a cross that resurrection to new life is possible?

Prayer

Lead me, Lord, lead me every day. In those times when I do not understand where we are going, help me simply to trust you. Amen.