

**Catholic Church of the Beatitudes  
Santa Barbara, CA**

**Passion Sunday, Cycle C – March 24, 2013**

**Kathleen Dewey**

**Reflections on Lk 22:14 – 23:56**

**W**e have just heard the story of a holy man who does his Father's will, even unto death; a humble man, who, at trial has no need to explain himself to his interrogators; a man who gathers his family and loved ones for a last meal, a meal where he gives himself away so he can be with them forever; an innocent man, so judged three separate times; a man who is betrayed, beaten, and humiliated; a man whose life is put into the hands of an angry mob. And then he is killed on a cross on a blood soaked hill.

Our Savior has completed his earthly journey.

What is it that calls us to the cross with Jesus? I can guess at some of the thoughts we may have as we experience Luke's Passion. Take up your cross each day. You can't have the resurrection without the cross. Our reluctance, our resistance to delve emotionally into the suffering we bear.

Passion Sunday is a time for us to renew our commitment to pick up our crosses daily, to bear what is heavy in our lives. As Simon the Cyrenian, we will take up our crosses and follow Jesus, called anew to discipleship, knowing that the burden we carry leads to the glory of Easter.

There is something else that calls us to the cross. Referring to the Celtic tradition, Phillip Newell writes, "... the cross is the greatest showing of God. It discloses the first and deepest impulse of God, self-giving." This almost suggests a need on God's part for total, complete, unconditional giving of self to us.

Last year on Friday at Triduum, I sat in the back row watching all you wonderful people embrace and kiss the cross, while I pondered what would bring me to venerate the cross that evening.

It wasn't the unspeakable suffering; it wasn't sorrow; it wasn't the burdens of my own life. None of that called me. And I *wasn't* going to venerate the cross, as I had often done before, just because that was what we did on Good Friday.

What finally drew me was that divine love. It wasn't even a decision. I couldn't *not* touch and kiss the symbol of that love. There it was – redemption, a new life, and the promise of resurrection in accepting God's bountiful love.

We will all go home tonight having entered into the experience of the centrality of the cross in our salvation history. This week we will walk the path to a deepening of our faith, to transformation in our lives, to triumph over death.

In service to one another, we will humbly wash feet, and humbly accept the washing of our feet; we will venerate the symbol of Christ's love and Christ's suffering and at the same time, embrace the burdens of our own lives. We will vigil and not sleep. And, as families often do after a death, we will gather to speak the stories of our ancestors, and be reminded of who we are and where we came from.

And we will wait for the dawn.

Amen.