

**The Wednesday in the 2nd Week of Lent**  
**February 28, 2024**  
**Matthew 20:17-28**

A loud cry rang out in the busy hospital room as the doctor yelled, "Push," and the mother gave her last gasp as the baby slid out amongst the commotion in the room. The nine months leading up to this point had been an adjustment filled with joy and hope of the world that the expected child would enter, but in that moment, as the child took their first breath, there was peace that they had arrived, peace that new life had begun, and peace for the journey ahead. At the same time, a soul was lost. An older person lay in hospice while the world around them flickered. At that moment, a loved one grasped their hand. The air in the room was thick, but the palpitation of hope was strong. A rattling sound arose from the older person as the light of the world said its final adieu. The loved one shed tears of sorrow, while for the older person, eternity was displayed in the blink of an eye.

As parents and guardians, we guide children and want them to have the best in life. Children are a gift, and the sacrifices we make for them are their reward. Imagine giving up your child as a sacrifice for the world. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life. Jesus entered the world, not with pomp and circumstance that could be afforded a king but as an innocent child, lying in a manger and knowing that one day he would become the crucified king. He confirms his brutal exit in Matthew 20:18-19 when he says, "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and the scribes, and they shall condemn him unto death." But Jesus goes further when asked for a space on his right and left side in heaven. He says, "Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my father."

God and Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice of love for a world to grant us a place in heaven. But that love doesn't only exist in the afterlife, for God gave us a new commandment, "love one another just as I have loved you." We enter this world with the most significant amount of love and innocence of life, and we leave this world with hope and assurance that we are going to a better place. May we all find that deep and abiding love for one another between those two points. Amen.

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