

Soly Wednesday

Reading Matthew 26:3-16

Meditation

Brutus betrayed Julius Caesar. Benedict Arnold betrayed an entire infant nation. And Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus Christ.

A betrayer is usually a trusted person who has authority or influence. A betrayer almost has to be someone close to you, someone whose turning against you hurts even more than the act itself. So it was with Judas Iscariot. He was one of the twelve disciples, one of the few that Jesus chose to be his special followers, those chosen to hear his message, to witness all the good that he did, and then go forth to tell the world as apostles, messengers, of Christ.

Why did Judas do it? We don't really know, except that the Gospel of Luke does tell us that "Satan entered" him (Luke 22:3). We do know that afterward Judas was sorry (although he never actually repented and accepted Christ). He sought to return the money he had been given by the chief priests and elders. But it was too late. In the end, Judas committed suicide (Matthew 27:3-5).

Is anyone today so heartless as to betray Jesus? It could be that we are doing it every day without realizing it. Every day Christ reminds us of his message of love—love of God, love of neighbor. Every day Christ reminds us of his acts of love—helping the weak and ill, comforting the outcasts of

society. Every day Christ reminds us how he showed his love for us—by sacrificing his own life for our mistakes.

How do we respond to Christ? Do we brush aside his message because the morning traffic is so heavy or because the papers are piled up high on the desk at work or because the children are always fighting at home? Do we not take the time to listen to Christ because we are too busy running from one social engagement to another? Do we sometimes grudgingly put in a few hours at church on Sunday if it doesn't interfere with anything else?

If so, then we are turning away from Christ, we are betraying Christ, just as surely as Judas did. We are shutting Christ, and his love for us, out of our lives and allowing Satan to enter, just as he entered Judas. Someday, we may realize our terrible mistake. But, as it was for Judas, it may be too late for us.

Prayer

It must have hurt you so much, Jesus, to be betrayed by one of your own.

Do we betray you as well?

Help us to stop in our busy lives and open our hearts to you.

May our hearts be filled with your love for us and with our love for you.

For reflection

Have I let Christ's love fill me? How?

How do I show others that I am a follower of Christ?

How do I betray the Lord in small ways? Not-so-small ways?

Did you know . . .

Holy Wednesday's readings and hymns juxtapose the faith of the woman who anointed Jesus with his betrayal by Judas. The betrayal is an event of singular significance to the Church, since it leads to the redemptive sacrifice of Christ on the cross. Wednesdays and Fridays are fast days throughout the church year because of the remembrance of Christ's betrayal and crucifixion on these days, respectively.