

I shall not be...

During this Holy Week I've noticed something interesting. Holy Week is the time where we focus our attention on Jesus and his journey towards his Passion and Death. Yet did you notice that there is an eerie focus on another character? It is very subtle but when you see it, it becomes very clear. This person was there on Passion Sunday, Holy Monday, Holy Tuesday and in today's Gospel.

On Sunday we heard in the Gospel of Luke how Jesus was betrayed by the kiss of this person. On Monday we heard how this man was complaining about how the woman spent so much money on ointment when it could have been given to the poor—money that he desired to put in his own pocket. And yesterday we hear about how Satan entered into this person right as he was about to betray Jesus. And finally today we hear of his plan to betray our Lord for 30 silver coins. This man is Judas.

So what is the significance of the silver coins and Judas?

The first significance is that the 30 coins represents the price of a slave.

If the ox gores a slave, male or female, the owner shall give to their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned. (Exodus 21:32)

Judas sold the King of heaven for the price of a slave, in modern day terms that would be around \$90. The God who created us out love sold for \$90.

Yet the significance of this goes much deeper.

If we look back into salvation history, we will find that this pattern of betrayal and selling had already happened before. Do you know the story in the Old Testament of a man who is betrayed by his brothers and sold for money? Joseph. Jacob had 12 sons and one of his sons was Joseph. Jacob sent Joseph to hang out with his brothers one day but what do they do to him?

They want to kill him but Reuben wanted to save him so he put Joseph in a pit instead. But guess who sells him?

“Then Judah said to his brothers, ‘What profit is there if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? Come let us sell him to the Ishmaelites...[they] sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver” (Gen 37: 26-27).

Judah and Judas. Both of them betrayed their loved ones for silver coins.

But the connections should not end there. Notice what happens to Joseph. He is captured and enslaved yes but then he is elevated to the right hand of Pharaoh and he saves the world by providing bread.

Jesus is the one obedient unto death on a cross like a slave, but through his Resurrection and Ascension he is elevated to the right hand of the Father as the King of kings and now he is providing the Bread of Life which saves the whole world from eternal death: if any one eats of this bread, he will live for ever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh.”

This is why the suffering servant in our first reading does not turn away from suffering, from those who would beat him, from those picking his beard, from those spitting on his face because he knows this: “I have set my face like flint knowing that I shall not be put to shame...the Lord God is my help.”

As we enter deeper into Holy Week, we must be reminded of the story that Jesus carried within his heart and the disposition of his heart: The Lord God is my help and I shall not be put to shame. This is how he endured the betrayal by Judas and the denial by Peter and the crucifixion upon the Cross: trust in God. This week as we enter more deeply into his Passion let us also enter more deeply into his trust in the Father.