

Homily For Tuesday of Holy Week - Year I

St Peter's 8:30am/7:00pm Masses - Tuesday, April 4, 2023

Isaiah 49: 1-6 "I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach the end of the earth."

Psalms 71 "You, O Lord, are my hope ... My mouth will tell of your deeds of salvation."

John 13:21-33,36-38 "Peter said: Lord, why can I not follow you now? Jesus said: You will follow later."

Betrayed or Denied

Introduction

I think you know that, even when we have strong convictions about our lives, what is true and real, what is false and fake, that sometimes the confusion overcomes us. We don't see the light but only the darkness. What seemed so clear at one point is now confused by events and by our state of mind.

On this Tuesday of Holy Week, Holy Tuesday, how well the Church reminds us of this human experience of light versus darkness, confusion versus certainty. We are reminded in these passages that it was at that most sacred and special Passover, the very reason we are here celebrating the liturgy of the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of the Saviour, that the worst of betrayals took place. Light and darkness. Satan and Jesus. Judas and Peter.

Isaiah

First is light and darkness. We are familiar with this theme in the ministry of Jesus. Physically blind people are made to see. Those who should be able to see clearly are blind. Watching this play out are the disciples who, some of the time get insight into what they are witnessing, but at other times are just baffled.

Their own prophets foretold of the coming anointed one, but there is still so much confusion. Isaiah continues to describe a suffering servant of the people. In English (not in Hebrew), we have a wonderful comparison. It was an honour to be the servant of God. But God says to Isaiah that it is too 'light' a thing that Israel should be a servant. It is a small thing compared to God's plan for Israel, which is

to be a 'light' to the nations. Remember that Jesus said "I do not call you servants any longer, but friends, because I have revealed everything to you."

Jesus, a son of Israel, will be both of those things. He will be the one who serves God perfectly. This he will do in a life and an act of total self giving. But he will also be the light for nations, not just for Israel but for all the nations.

John

This theme of light will be played out in the disciples. First is Judas. I have a hard time talking about Judas. I feel hatred and condemnation for him, but also pity. Surely three years with Jesus should have given him a sense of God's hand acting to bring all things to the right conclusion. And, yet, he somehow got lost in the darkness along the way, and confused about from where the victory would come.

Jesus felt that night "deeply troubled." Judas was a brother. They were sitting down to a meal of fellowship. But Satan enters him just at that moment of fellowship. At the Eucharist, Jesus enters into us. But, at that first Eucharist, Satan entered Judas instead. He was angry at Jesus. Yesterday's Gospel tells us about Jesus rebuking him over precious ointment that Mary Magdalene used to anoint Jesus. His pride was wounded by a rebuke which was intended to bring repentance.

As Christians, we also know that this is the moment that the deceiver, the father of lies, the devil, has chosen to take a stand against his enemy, but our Saviour. Judas took the bread from the saviour and left at once, and went out into the night. It is always night when we move away from the one who is the light of the world, light from light, true God from true God.

The bread and wine are not consecrated at this point. Jesus will not share his sacredness with Satan, who would not receive it anyway, but he goes out into the night, into the darkness.

Peter cannot imagine such a betrayal. Jesus says that one of them will do this, but that is impossible for him. He cannot even imagine denying Jesus. With a false bravado, he claims undying devotion. But Jesus always knows our hearts. We

learn this from his three years of reading the hearts of men and women. He sees the definitive turn towards darkness of Judas. In Peter, he sees that it is a temporary darkness, that of fear.

Then there is the figure of John. He doesn't name himself in the story in order to make room for us to see ourselves as the 'beloved disciple'. Who will betray Jesus, Peter asks John to ask Jesus. John is close to the Sacred Heart. That is our posture. Draw near to his heart and, even if we are afraid and deny Jesus, from there we will not allow darkness to overtake us.

On Holy Thursday, we will remember, not the betrayal, but the institution of the sacrament of Christ's ongoing presence with us in the Eucharist. The words of Jesus remind us one more time, if we need reminding, which I do. He reminds us that he is the God and saviour of all time: I have been glorified, which took place at his baptism and at the transfiguration. I will be glorified, at the resurrection.

Call To Conversion

Should we be worried that this could happen to us? Yes, if we let pride dictate our hearts. But not if we do as the beloved disciple John did, lean against the heart of Jesus. We all betray or deny Jesus in some way. Peter does it with his false bravado. St. Thomas More says that every man and woman must beware of even the very least speck of pride." We might ask with Peter and the beloved disciple "Who is it who will betray you?" When the darkness of night seems all around us, our light makes room for us next to his heart.

Fortunately, sin is not the last word; the last word is God's mercy. Every repented thief has his place in Paradise. At the very hour of darkness, the hour of the prince of this world, the sacrifice of Christ secretly becomes the source from which the forgiveness of our sins will pour forth inexhaustibly." (CCC N° 1851)

In Easter's glowing night, in opposition to the darkness of the vigil of his death—Jesus' words will become true: "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him."

Key Passages

Entrance Antiphon: *False witnesses rise up against me and they breathe out violence.*

Collect: *Grant us so to celebrate the mysteries of the Lord's Passion, that we may merit to receive your pardon.*

Isaiah: *The Lord called me before I was born. While I was in my mother's womb he named me. He made my mouth like a sharp sword. He made me a polished arrow. In his quiver he hid me away. And he said to me: "You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified." But I said: "I have laboured in vain. I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity." The Lord says, who formed me, that Israel will be gathered to him. I will give you as a light to the nation, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.*

Psalm: *I will sing of your salvation, O Lord. Be to me a rock of refuge, to save me. Rescue me from the hand of the wicked ... I still proclaim your wondrous deeds.*

John: *Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world. Troubled in spirit, he declared: One of you will betray me. Peter motioned the one whom Jesus loved to ask Jesus: Lord, who is it? Jesus answered: It is the one to whom I give this piece of bread. So, when he had dipped it in the dish, he gave it to Judas. After he received the bread, Satan entered Judas. He immediately went out, and it was night. Jesus said: Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. God will also glorify him in himself. Little children, where I am going, you cannot come. Simon Peter said: Lord, where are you going? Jesus answered: Where I am going, you cannot follow now. Peter said: Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you. Jesus answered: Will you lay down your life for me? Before the cock crows, you will have denied me three times.*