

Homily For Tuesday of Holy Week - Year I

St Peter's 8:30am Mass- Tuesday, March 30, 2021

Isaiah 49: 1-6 "I spent my strength for vanity. The Lord says: I will give you as a light to the nations."

Psalms 71:1-6+ "Be to me a refuge ... Rescue me from the hand of the wicked."

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

Betrayer or Beloved - It's in the Heart

Introduction

There are often stories in our literature, where a great celebration, a happy event, is marred by some terrible thing about to happen. It is often done in the technique called 'dramatic irony'. That is where the reader or viewer knows the terrible thing that is about to happen, but the characters in the story or play do not. In *Oedipus Rex*, Oedipus seeks to expose the murderer of his predecessor, King Laius, in order to solve a riddle. But the reader already knows the fact that he himself is the murderer.

There is an element of this kind of tragic turn in John's account of the Last Supper. We know that Judas is the one who will betray Jesus before the others do. And we know the horrific events that are about to unfold. Our Holy Week began with Palm Sunday's reading of Mark's account of the Passion of our Lord, so we are not unaware.

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, from carrying out God's plan for the salvation of the world. As Christians, we also know the most important thing of all. We know that, despite how it looks in the moment, God's great plan for the blessing of the world will not be thwarted. Pharaoh could not do it over a thousand years earlier. Herod couldn't do it. Pilate and Caiaphas won't be able to do it.

The prophet Isaiah foretells one who was hidden away but who will be the sharp sword of truth, one who will be glorified before all because he will be the servant of all, and not just for Israel but a light for all nations "to the ends of the earth."

God is in control. On Holy Thursday, we will not remember, not the betrayal, but the institution of the sacrament of Christ's ongoing presence with us in the Eucharist.

Gospel of John

Even at this moment of betrayal, Jesus is in control of his destiny. Nothing is hidden from him. He spent his whole three year ministry revealing the hearts of men and women. Jesus knows and, unbelievably for us, has loved his betrayer. That is his great distress at this moment. He gave everything to Judas, a firsthand intimate view of the kingdom of heaven.

But Judas placed himself outside that kingdom, in four steps. These are steps we should be well aware of. These are steps to remind us that, while Satan could not prevail over Jesus, he will continue to undermine our participation in Jesus' glory. He will continue to seek control over our hearts.

Step one for Judas was that his heart had developed a worldly focus. Yesterday's gospel passage showed us his heart. He complained when Mary, the sister of Martha, poured costly ointment on Jesus. Because of his wrong focus, he did not take to heart the rebuke of Jesus but was made bitter by it. We may be in that situation when our Lord seeks to correct a wrong focus in our own hearts.

In step two for the betrayer's heart, we see in verse two of this chapter, that "the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas to betray Jesus." His refusal to accept the Lord's rebuke made his heart vulnerable to the promptings of the devil.

In step three, Satan actually enters the heart of Judas. While the meal has been prepared for the Apostles to celebrate the sacred Passover meal with their beloved Lord, the betrayer's heart has been prepared for a bitter meal. Notice that Jesus gives him a piece of bread. Later, this same bread will be broken and

Jesus will declare that this bread IS his body, blessed and broken to bring the hearts of everyone who will receive it, into communion with the Father and the Son. We should note that Jesus, always in control, makes sure that Satan will not be present at this sacrament. He sends Satan out into the night, into the darkness.

We might now look at the others. They are confused. They don't understand the words of Jesus. They know something terrible is at hand but not what to do about it or even to think. But the Beloved Disciple does the only thing he can think of to do. He reclines next to Jesus. The word used here is 'kolpos'. That means heart. The unnamed beloved disciple, understood to be John, in the confusion and distress, draws close to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Even Peter, brave Peter, whose bravery will be crushed under the weight of his fear, asks that beloved disciple to ask Jesus about his betrayer.

In the prologue of John's Gospel, the same word is used to describe how Jesus is the only one who knows the heart of the Father. But Jesus reveals that heart to all of his beloved disciples if they will only lean against his breast, his heart.

Call To Action

The darkness of the night is not where we belong. We belong at the kolpos, the heart, of Jesus. All of us will betray Jesus in some way. That is what sin is and that is our spiritual state without Jesus. John does not name the beloved disciple because he means for us to understand that we are the ones who are invited to recline in the place next to Jesus and lay our head on his heart, to rest in his forgiveness. This is all we need to know in the confusion of our lives, when the darkness of night seems all around us. All we need to know is that Jesus Christ, our light, makes room for us next to his heart.

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.*