

## Wednesday of Holy Week

### Principal Service readings

Isaiah 50.4-9a	Third song of the servant of the Lord
Psalms 70	Prayer of trust in time of need
Hebrews 12.1-3	Persevere in running the race before us
John 13.21-32	The treachery of Judas foretold

### Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,  
speak to our hearts in the stillness,  
keep us steadfast in the foundation that cannot be shaken,  
lift up our eyes to behold the vision of your glory;  
and perfect our faith, now and always. Amen.

Society of Saint Francis

### Gospel Reading

#### *The treachery of Judas foretold*

<sup>21</sup>Jesus was troubled in spirit, and declared, 'Very truly, I tell you, one of you will betray me.' <sup>22</sup>The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he was speaking. <sup>23</sup>One of his disciples – the one whom Jesus loved – was reclining next to him; <sup>24</sup>Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking. <sup>25</sup>So while reclining next to Jesus, he asked him, 'Lord, who is it?' <sup>26</sup>Jesus answered, 'It is the one to whom I give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish.' So when he had dipped the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas son of Simon Iscariot. <sup>27</sup>After he received the piece of bread, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, 'Do quickly what you are going to do.' <sup>28</sup>Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him. <sup>29</sup>Some thought that, because Judas had the common purse, Jesus was telling him, 'Buy what we need for the festival'; or, that he should give something to the poor. <sup>30</sup>So, after receiving the piece of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night.

<sup>31</sup>When he had gone out, Jesus said, 'Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. <sup>32</sup>If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once.'

John 13.21–32 NRSV<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *New Revised Standard Version Bible* is copyright © 1989 Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

## Comments and Questions

At this special festival meal – what would turn out to be their last such meal together – John mentions the disciple Jesus loved, without mentioning his name (13.23). Some people think this is John himself, the gospel writer. We get the impression he is a young man, perhaps the youngest there. So close was their relationship that he felt able to ask Jesus the question that all of the disciples wanted to ask. People celebrating feasts like the Passover would recline on couches – only slaves would either stand or sit. So, the beloved disciple was reclining close to Jesus. He could ask him quietly, and hear his quiet reply, without disturbing the others. When Jesus came out with the shocking statement that one of them would betray him (13.21), nobody had any idea who he was talking about. Nobody would have thought of Judas, he was simply one of them. Jesus had just washed his feet along with the others, just before supper. Because he was the treasurer, some of them thought he was going out to buy something (13.29). Jesus used a special sign of friendship with Judas – dipping a piece of bread in the dish. Perhaps this is too much for Judas, who then leaves the room.

While others may not have realised it, Jesus knew what was happening, for he says, 'Now the Son of Man has been glorified' (13.30). Rather than contemplating his forthcoming agony, Jesus sees the glory that will result.

## Quotations

1

For you will certainly carry out God's purpose, however you act, but it makes a difference to you whether you serve like Judas or like John.

*The problem of pain* / C. S. Lewis. 1940

2

Because of Jesus' supposed predestination, God would have had to choose the people who would kill and betray his son, choose the method by which he would be killed (crucifixion), and the time at which the event would occur. Those guilty of killing Jesus would therefore be

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simply carrying out God's wishes without the free will to have chosen a path for themselves."

*Disproving Christianity, and other secular writings* / David G. McAfee. 2010

3

Let's think of that moment when a woman washed the feet of Jesus with the nard, so expensive: it is a religious moment, a moment of gratitude, a moment of love. And he [Judas] stands apart with bitter criticism: 'But this could have been used for the poor!' This is the first reference that I have found, in the Gospel, to poverty as an ideology. The ideologue does not know what love is, because he does not know how to give himself."

*Encountering truth: meeting God in the everyday* / Pope Francis. 2015

## Related topics

*For further study:*

Eucharist, paschal mystery

## Closing Prayer

O God,  
who through the only Saviour has made us your children:  
suffer us not to conspire against our high calling in you,  
lest we pass with Iscariot into endless night;  
nor ever go away from the true light,  
who alone has the words of eternal life,  
the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

*A procession of passion prayers* / Eric Milner-White. 1951