

## Closing Prayer

O God, who willed your Son to submit for our sake  
to the yoke of the Cross,  
so that you might drive from us the power of the enemy,  
grant us, your servants, to attain the grace of the resurrection.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.

*Roman missal · Wednesday of Holy Week*

Lectionary-based Catechesis • Year C

## Wednesday of Holy Week

### Principal Service readings

Isaiah 50.4-9a	'I offered my back to those who struck me'
Psalms 70	'I looked in vain for compassion, for consolers'
Hebrews 12.1-3	'Let us throw off everything that weighs us down'
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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## Comments and Questions

Jesus know the identity of the one who will betray him (13.01-11), and he knows also that a change of heart will change Peter's present ignorance into understanding (13.7). What of the other disciples? Jesus knows who he has chosen. He has no illusions about their fragility, as he already knows one will betray him and one will deny him. Against the background of their fragility Jesus tells his disciples about the events that are going to take place that will fulfil the scriptures, so that when they do happen they might come to know and believe.

Jesus raises the question of the betrayer and begins a dialogue with his disciples that will lead to the identity of the betrayer being revealed (12.26). The disciples have an understandable reaction to what Jesus tells them. They are 'uncertain' (using the rare verb *aporein*, which indicates perplexity). Ignorance, confusion and misunderstanding continue (cf. 12.6, 7, 9, 12-13). The Beloved Disciple appears for the first time, reclining next to Jesus. Despite his position of honour he shares in the perplexity of the other disciples. From this point on Peter is subordinated to the Beloved Disciple as he asks, 'Who is it?' (12.25), assuming that the Beloved Disciple has some knowledge of the matter. The Beloved Disciple, though, does not know either, and has to ask Jesus.

Jesus responds to the disciple's question by saying he will share an intimate gesture with the betrayer: dipping the morsel of bread and sharing it with him (12.26). *After* receiving the morsel, we are told, Satan enters into Judas (12.27). Judas now becomes part of the Satanic programme that is opposed to the programme of God that has been revealed through Jesus. Yet, in a final gesture Jesus does share the morsel of bread with Judas, his future betrayer. Several indications in the text suggest that this sharing of the morsel of bread is rooted in the eucharistic traditions of the Johannine community. Jesus' use of Psalm 41.9 in 12.18 is the first indication. The Septuagint version of this passage, 'the one who ate my bread' has the 'proper' word for human eating, *esthieien*, but this is replaced in John by the less delicate term, *trogein*, to munch or crunch with the teeth. In itself the might not be significant, but the only other place where this verb appears is in 6.54-58, the most explicitly eucharistic passage in the Gospel, where it is used

four times (6.54, 56, 57, 58). The eucharist is a subtheme of the meal and the morsel, just as baptism is a subtheme of the foot-washing. Disciples will always display ignorance, fail Jesus, and deny him, and even betray him. Jesus' never-failing love for disciples such as these, reveals the unique God, the God of love.

## Quotations

### 1

One caution, and I have done. In order to rouse modern minds to an understanding of the issues, I ventured to introduce in this chapter a picture of the sort of bad man whom we most easily perceive to be truly bad. But when the picture has done that work, the sooner it is forgotten the better. In all discussions of Hell we should keep steadily before our eyes the possible damnation, not of our enemies nor our friends (since both these disturb the reason) but of ourselves. This chapter is not about your wife or son, nor about Nero or Judas Iscariot; it is about you and me.

C. S. Lewis, 1898–1963

### 2

Peter denied Jesus; Judas betrayed Jesus. The bad news was that both of them fell off the track and were both filled with regrets, remorse and anguish for their mischievous behaviours. However it was only Peter who chose to rise again after falling! Judas chose to end it with suicide! If you fall, you can rise again!

*The great handbook of quotes* / Israelmore Ayivor. 2014

## Related topics

*For further study:*

God's love; Jesus Christ; Eucharist; destiny