2026-04-08: Eve of Thursday - Jesus Loved Judas; Jesus Loves Me

Judas and Mary

- The theme that the Church gives us today is the contrast between Judas and Mary, the sister of Lazarus.
  - 1st Hour: Plotting of the Pharisees
  - 3rd Hour: Judas agrees to betray Christ for 30 pieces of silver
  - 6th Hour: Mary takes a pound of very costly oil of spikenard and anoints the feet of Jesus and wipes His feet with her hair and Judas complains
  - 9th Hour: The sinful woman at the house of Simon came with an alabaster flask of very costly fragrant oil and poured it on His head and the disciples complained; Judas agrees to betray Christ for 30 pieces of silver
- There is a stark contrast here
  - Mary sacrificed a lot of money for Christ; Judas stole from the money box and betrayed Christ for 30 silver coins
  - Mary acted out of loyalty; Judas acted out of betrayal
  - Mary focused on serving another; Judas focused on himself
  - Mary kisses the feet of the Lord out of love and gratitude. Judas will betray the Lord with a kiss.
- It is clear that Mary did this out of love for Christ... and Judas also out of love, but for money.
  - Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also

I want to focus today on Judas' betrayal of the Lord... and specifically, on the fact that the Lord Jesus loved Judas. And despite His love for Judas, Judas betrayed Him.

Prophecies

- 3rd Hour Psalm - ”His words were softened above oil. And they are arrows.”
  - The tune of Avchnon - starts very low and somber and sorrowful but in the middle “A-alleluia” and at the end “ey eye eyyyy”
- 6th Hour Prophecy from Amos - first three verses
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Jesus loved Judas

- He chose him - even though He knew

- "And when it was day, He called His disciples to *Himself;* and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles: Simon, whom He also named Peter, and Andrew his brother; James and John; Philip and Bartholomew; Matthew and Thomas; James the *son* of Alphaeus, and Simon called the Zealot; Judas *the son* of James, and Judas Iscariot who also became a traitor." (Luke 6:13-16)
- "But there are some of you who do not believe.” For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him." (John 6:64)

- He entrusted him
  - He gave him authority (Luke 9:1-2, 6)
    - Then He called His twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases. [2] He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.
    - [6] So they departed and went through the towns, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.
  - He sent him to preach and heal
  - He allowed him to handle the money (John 12:6)
    - This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.

- He endured his weaknesses
  - He endured his stealing from the money box (John 12:6)
  - He endured his hypocrisy
    - "Why wasn't this sold and given to the poor?" - while he steals from the money box
    - Judas was sent to preach - but he was preaching a message (the Truth) that he wasn't living
    - Christ allowed him to continue in his ministry, trying all the while to bring about his repentance
  - He endured his betrayal
    - Judas is sitting at the table of the Last Supper AFTER he had decided to betray the Lord; after he had agreed on a price!
    - Christ still feeds him and includes him and serves him
  - He endured his deception
    - "Is it I, Rabbi?" - he is still maintaining the appearance of innocence...
    - The Lord answers him "You have said it" but doesn't expose him to the others
  - He endured the kiss
    - "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?"
    - Using a symbol of love... to carry out a betrayal
  - Christ's endurance is clear in that the disciples did not suspect Judas

- He served him
  - He served him personally... 1:1
    - He washed his feet
    - This is an intimate service
    - This is a humbling service

        - This is a physical service
    - He served him equally
        - He didn't rush through his turn and wash his feet less than the other disciples
        - He didn't skip him
        - He didn't treat him any differently
    - He served him until the end
        - This is just a few hours before the betrayal

- He warned him
    - Prophecy of Amos from 3rd Hour of Eve of Thursday
        - Israel worshipped idols
        - The Lord took away their food… but they did not return
        - So he took away rain for three months (no water) in some places… but they did not return
        - Parching and blight… but they did not return
        - Sent death… but they did not return
        - Fire… but they did not return
        - Consumed them like Sodom and Gomorrah… still, they did not return
    - "One of you will betray Me" - at the table
        - Telling him that He knows what is happening, but without exposing him.
        - Giving space to repent... didn't work
    - "Is it I? You have said it."
        - Telling him that He knows it is him, again without exposing him
        - More space to repent... didn't work
    - "He who dips the bread with me"
        - Now saying it in such a way that he might be exposed...
        - Maybe that will bring him to repentance... didn't work
    - Judas showed up with soldiers
        - "Friend, why have you come?" (Matthew 26:50)
        - Even then, the Lord gives him one last chance to repent... he doesn't take it

- He protected him
    - He protected his reputation among the disciples, in case he would repent
    - "Jesus answered, 'I have told you that I am *He.* Therefore, if you seek Me, let these go their way,' that the saying might be fulfilled which He spoke, 'Of those whom You gave Me I have lost none.'" (John 18:8-9)
        - This is the same protection that was being offered to Judas
    - In the first Jewish Trial, with Annas the High Priest, "The high priest then asked Jesus about His disciples and His doctrine." (John 18:19)
        - Christ ignores the question about His disciples and answers about His doctrine
        - Why would He ignore that?
        - Because He wants to protect His disciples. This is the same protection that was offered to Judas

- He left the door open for him

- Even after he betrayed the Lord, he still could have returned. He could have repented. He could have come back to the disciples. He could have come back to the Church.
- The door was open for his repentance - but he did not take it
- St Peter denied => repented
- Judas betrayed => despaired

Despite all this, Judas betrayed the Lord Jesus

The Lord Loves Us

- We talked a lot about Judas and how bad he is... but in truth, we are not so far from him.
- We are chosen...
  - Chosen by name
    - Even before we were born
    - **“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you;" (Jeremiah 1:5)**
  - Chosen for a purpose
    - Chosen to live a life of holiness, to serve, to glorify God in our families and in our work and in our school
  - Chosen to experience God's love
  - Chosen in our community
  - Chosen for eternity
    - Grace - gift freely given not based on the worthiness of the receiver, but on the goodness of the giver
    - Baptised and Chrismated
    - Eucharist for eternal life
    - Life of Repentance (yesterday Fr Reweis' sermon) for forgiveness of sin
- We are entrusted...
  - With talents
  - With money
  - With 24 hours in the day
  - With various responsibilities... spouse, children, services
  - Parable of the Talents
    - **“For *the kingdom of heaven is* like a man traveling to a far country, *who* called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey." (Matthew 25:14-15)**
- We are endured...
  - How many times do we fall?
  - How many weaknesses do we have?
  - And yet, the Lord still provides for us, He is still giving us food and water and shelter and a Church and jobs and money and leisure and entertainment...
  - **"*Through* the Lord’s mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. *They are* new every morning; Great *is* Your**

faithfulness." (Lamentations 3:22-23)

- We are served...
  - How many people did the Lord send to serve you?
  - Your parents
  - Your priests - most churches don't get three priests!
  - Your Sunday School servants
  - BRAVE Men Servants
  - Virtuous Women Servants
  - St Joseph Meeting Servants
  - The St Verina Cleaning Servants that are cleaning the church for you
  - The St Martha Aghapy Servants that are preparing nice meals for you
  - The Bethlehem Servants preparing Orban for liturgy and extra orban even for days without liturgy... like Sunday School, tasbeha, or extra for you
  - The servants who are visiting the sick and elderly
  - The servants who are asking about you and checking on you
  - The servants who are working in the background
  - Doesn't God send all these servants for my own benefit?
  - **"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." (Mark 10:45)**
- We are warned...
  - When Abouna or a Servant gives me a message, isn't that a warning from the Lord?
  - When I read a verse that rebukes me, isn't that a warning from the Lord?
  - When the Holy Spirit convicts me, isn't that a warning from the Lord?
  - **"Listen to counsel and receive instruction, That you may be wise in your latter days." (Proverbs 19:20)**
- We are protected...
  - In our basic needs
  - In our health
  - **"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of My Father's hand." (John 10:27-29)**
  - "Love covers a multitude of sins" (1 Peter 4:8)
  - "For You have covered us, helped us..." (Thanksgiving Prayer)
- The door is open for my repentance

How do I respond to God's Love

Judas responded with betrayal

- Recognize God's Love
  - **"We love because He first loved us." (1 John 4:19)**
  - Pray
  - Read the Scripture
  - Reflect on God's love daily
  - Give thanks for His provision

    - Live contently
- Repent when we betray
    - **“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9)**
    - As Fr Reweis said yesterday, repentance is not a moment - it's a life.
    - Life of repentance
    - It means examining myself DAILY
    - It means receiving the Eucharist WEEKLY
    - It means sitting for confession MONTHLY
- Serve
    - When I am filled with God's love, His love will overflow from me and I will give from that love to others
    - Serve your family
    - Serve your Church
    - Serve your community
    - Serve those who are needy
    - **“A new commandment I give to you: love one another; just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.” (John 13:34)**

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