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Wednesday's Gospel: The Heart's Revelation

Gospel for Wednesday in Holy Week, and commentary.

Gospel (*Mt 26:14-25*)

Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, “What will you give me if I deliver him to you?” And they paid him thirty pieces of silver. And from that moment he sought an opportunity to betray him.

Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Where will you have us

prepare for you to eat the passover?” He said, “Go into the city to a certain one, and say to him, ‘The Teacher says, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at your house with my disciples.’” And the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the passover.

When it was evening, he sat at table with the twelve disciples; and as they were eating, he said, “Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.” And they were very sorrowful, and began to say to him one after another, “Is it I, Lord?” He answered, “He who has dipped his hand in the dish with me, will betray me. The Son of man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born.” Judas, who betrayed him, said, “Is it I, Master?” He said to him, “You have said so.”

Commentary

The end of Jesus' earthly life is approaching. Our Lord's preaching has met with contrasting responses. On the one hand, that of those who are simple, who are open to God's action, who have the daring to believe in his saving message. On the other, that of those who refuse to give up their opinions, who are unwilling to change, who see in the Master's words of hope a threat to their position in society. Jesus has extended his hand to everyone. Many have taken hold of it and been filled with joy. But others have closed off their hearts, and are walking rapidly down the path of despair.

The prophecy of the old man Simeon is being fulfilled: "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is spoken

against . . . that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed” (*Lk* 2:34-35). The heart of Judas, filled with greed and envy, leads him to commit the worst of crimes. But the hearts of the other disciples are filled with light; they want to celebrate the Passover with their Master and prepare it just as He has asked. Together with Him they want to remember the history of his People, perhaps because they sense that in Him that history is reaching its culmination.

Jesus also opens up for us the thoughts of his own heart. During the Passover meal, He reveals the sorrow that he carries within: “Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me” (v. 21). The resulting confusion breaks down the atmosphere of intimacy that had been created in the Cenacle. The apostles don’t know what to say and react with a mixture of simplicity with trust: “Is it I, Lord?” (v. 22).

When contemplating the Passion, the various figures seem to reflect the fundamental attitudes that each person can take before Jesus: fidelity, compassion, rejection, weakness, repentance.... Each person tells us something, and helps us discover the thoughts in our own heart, recognizing its ability to rise up with great acts of love, but also to fall into the traps of selfishness. Despite our weakness, we want to be faithful to Jesus. Like the apostles, in our prayer we can humbly approach our Lord and ask Him to give us light to know ourselves better and uproot from our heart whatever separates us from Him. Jesus will show us the truth of our heart and, above all, the strength of his mercy.

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