

REFLECTION ON TUESDAY, HOLY WEEK 2021

Isaiah 49:1-6 John 13:21-33.36-38

The Gospel says that Jesus was 'deeply disturbed' at the thought of being betrayed by one of his own. It is not surprising.

He had personally chosen and trained Judas. Judas had heard his teaching and witnessed His miracles. Yet now he was about to betray him. The treachery of a friend is much more hurtful than the treachery of an enemy.

We all know how disappointing, painful and bitter it can be when you're let down by someone you love. Those who have been betrayed can take comfort from the fact that Jesus knows how they feel. What matters is how we deal with the hurt. It could make us bitter and poison our hearts to love again.

Despite feeling hurt, Jesus did not hit back at Judas. He even refused to expose him in front of the others. Thus, Jesus left the door open for him to return to the fold.

The moment Judas decided to betray Jesus, he left the light and passed into darkness. It is scary to think that Judas was exposed to all that Jesus had to offer, yet it came to nothing.

When Judas finally realises that he has betrayed his Lord, Judas apparently convinces himself that he can never be forgiven. He concludes that Christ can never love him again and could never forgive a sinner like him.

Peter declared that he was ready to follow Him, ready even to lay down his life for Him. Brave words. But Jesus knew Peter better than Peter knew himself. He said, 'So you're ready to lay down your life for me! Before the cock crows you will have denied me three times'

Peter loved Jesus and assumed that his love would endure anything. He was not aware of his own weakness. By next morning he had learned a bitter but salutary lesson.

In learning about Peter, we learn about ourselves too. We may not be as strong, or as courageous or as generous as we think we are. Peter fell, not because he was weak, but because he thought he was strong. He shows us the danger of presumption.

More important still, the incident shows us what Jesus is like. Though Jesus knows our weakness and can foresee our falls, he refuses to give up on us and he does not write us off. When we fall, he helps us to learn from the experience and to go forward again, relying this time, not on our own strength but relying on Christ's strength and grace.

May God be our light and help. Amen

Fr Patrick