



Betrayal

5th Friday of Lent

Then Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, went to the chief priests in order to betray him to them. When they heard it, they were greatly pleased, and promised to give him money. So he began to look for an opportunity to betray him.

Mark 14:10, 11

Judas was a realist. He had been listening and he understood. At least, he understood that the dreams he and the others had when they signed on to follow Jesus were not going to become reality. The shadow of the cross loomed with unmistakable clarity in his sight, and, I imagine, he figured he deserved something for the three years of his life that he had committed to this now doomed cause. Cut the best deal you can make and get as far away from Jerusalem as fast as you can, he figured.

Judas had been a trusted member of the inner circle, the keeper of the common purse. He had walked with Jesus, watched him heal, listened as he taught, distributed the bread that fed the multitude. It is hard for us to understand how he could do what he did. The only explanation that the others who knew him could offer was that Satan put it in his heart to betray the Lord.

The point of the story is not that we are, all of us, little Judases waiting for the opportune time to betray the Lord, but rather that none of us is ever exempt from the temptation to betray the things we value the most, and some of us have. Jesus warned his listeners to beware of the scribes. We might also beware of the evil that lurks within us, praying that Jesus would strengthen us and equip us to follow him, even if it is to a cross.

Prayer

Lead me, Lord, and give me grace to follow, knowing that wherever you lead it is the right way to go. Amen.