



Pledge of Loyalty

When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. And Jesus said to them,

*You will all become deserters; for it is written,
'I will strike the shepherd,
and the sheep will be scattered.'*

But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee." Peter said to him, "Even though all become deserters, I will not." Jesus said to him, "Truly I tell you, this day, this very night, before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times." But he said vehemently, "Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you." And all of them said the same. (Mark 14:26-31)

Have you ever made a grand promise that you lived to regret? I suppose most all of us have. The only way to have avoided such a predicament is never to have dreamed or never to have felt fully and totally committed to anything or anyone.

It was beyond their greatest imaginings that they would ever, *ever*, deny Jesus. Things would never get that bad. Peter, as usual, took the lead in speaking up and the rest were eager to join in his declaration of undying loyalty. Yet in only a matter of hours Peter would deny that he even knew Jesus, not once but three times, and the rest of them would flee in fear.

What I think is most remarkable is not that the disciples failed Jesus. Given the circumstances we might as well, but that Jesus, fully anticipating their utter and dismal failure, still promised: *After I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.* Knowing full well that they would desert him, still he anticipated that they would once again follow him to Galilee.

All of us stumble in our journeys of faith and discipleship, sometimes intentionally, sometimes quite unintentionally, but Jesus forgives us and calls us still to follow him.

Prayer

O use me, Lord, use even me, just as Thou wilt, and when, and where, until Thy blessed face I see, Thy rest, Thy joy, Thy glory share. Amen.

Frances R. Havergal, 1872