



Betrayed with a Kiss

Immediately, while he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; and with him there was a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, 'The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard.' So when he came, he went up to him at once and said, 'Rabbi!' and kissed him. Then they laid hands on him and arrested him. But one of those who stood near drew his sword and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear. Then Jesus said to them, 'Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit? Day after day I was with you in the

temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. But let the scriptures be fulfilled.' All of them deserted him and fled.

A certain young man was following him, wearing nothing but a linen cloth. They caught hold of him, but he left the linen cloth and ran off naked. (Mark 14:43-51)

It seems to me that had Judas stood at the back of the crowd and whispered: "Jesus is that one, that one over there," his betrayal would seem less heinous somehow, but he approached at the head of a "crowd with swords and clubs" and he walked up to the one who trusted him with his life, called him by the title that he had known him these last three years, and then kissed him on the cheek as a means of identifying him to the rabble rousers. "Swords and clubs" emboldened him or maybe it was that he knew he would not face any opposition. He could do what he had to do and slip away into the darkness of night to enjoy his ill-gotten gain, but ill-gotten gain is rarely enjoyed, at least it was not to be by Judas.

One near Jesus drew his sword and attacked, but Jesus stopped him. When they realized that there was to be no fight that Jesus was actually going to allow himself to be taken, they all "deserted him and fled," and Jesus was left to face the mob alone. What more could they have done? What more can any of us do when the odds are against us, when the wrong is more than we can right? I ask you: what can you do?

Prayer

Father of mercies, give me the strength and the courage to take my place alongside Jesus and to stand for what is right. Amen.