

WEDNESDAY IN HOLY WEEK, MARCH 27

After he received the piece of bread, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, "Do quickly what you are going to do."

John 13:27



Today's passage from John's Gospel portrays an intimate and dramatic scene of pain and betrayal. Jesus is eating supper with his close friends when he becomes troubled in spirit and announces to the group that one of them will betray him. He then signals with a piece of bread dipped in a dish who it will be, and knowing full well what is to come, Jesus tells Judas to carry out his betrayal quickly.

Sometimes when I reflect on the Last Supper, I picture the famous painting by Leonardo da Vinci that depicts Jesus and his disciples all seated on one side of a very long table. John's portrayal, however, suggests something less formal and much more intimate.

In this small group of friends, Jesus is able to dip his piece of bread, hand it to Judas, and get his message across immediately. Not only is this group of friends physically close, Judas is portrayed as being even closer. John's Gospel makes a point of saying that Judas has been entrusted to make preparations for the celebrations and offer donations to the poor. The one who has been entrusted with great responsibility heads out into the night to carry out the ultimate betrayal.

Today's readings

Psalm 70 | Isaiah 50:4–9a

Hebrews 12:1–3 | John 13:21–32

What is John's Gospel trying to say to us here? What is the Gospel writer attempting to warn us about? How can it be that sometimes those who are seemingly closest to Christ betray all that he represents?