

TUESDAY COMMUNION

Hymn:

Reading: Mark 14. 4350

Prayers:

Through the centuries people have tried to get inside the mind of Judas. Why did he quite deliberately betray Jesus into the hands of those who wanted him dead and gone.

Some people have spoken of Judas as a man who is disappointed that Jesus is not the kind of Messiah that he wanted!

According to this theory, Judas wanted a military Messiah who would drive the Romans out of Israel. He wanted to recreate a nation living under God's rule, under the rule of the Priest and King called "The Messiah"!

Others have wondered if he thought that by placing Jesus in this situation of great danger Jesus would suddenly show the power of God by wondrously overcoming his enemies and reveal himself as the all conquering Messiah of God.....

Perhaps these imaginative guesses as to why Judas betrayed Jesus point to something within our human makeup.

We human beings have a tendency to find excuses for our failure to love God and to love each other.

Many of us, seek blame others for our failings and find it hard to recognise that what we have said or done has been disloyal, false, unkind or mean spirited.

We seek to justify what we have done by suggesting that it was all for the best when, in reality, we have acted in our own self interest.

Judas quite deliberately leads the soldiers from the Temple guard to where he knows Jesus will be found and identifies him in the dark by that fateful kiss.

It was an act of disloyalty and treachery, a repudiation of all that Jesus had been to him, a willingness to share in the destruction of this world's light!

Of course, others, too, are weak that night.

Those final words, "*All of them deserted him and fled*"

tell us that in that dark and dangerous hour the disciples all departed like frightened sheep concerned only to preserve their own skins.

They had their excuses too:

- tired
- anxious for their families
- frightened
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Yet, when it comes to the crunch Jesus is left alone to face those coming hours knowing that one friend has betrayed him and the others have been scattered to the winds.

Perhaps in this Advent season as we seek to be honest about ourselves we may ask what it means for us to be “loyal” to Jesus?

- What does it mean to be loyal to Christ in our thinking, in the prayers we offer and the books we read.....
- What does it mean to be loyal to him in our speaking: in the way we speak of other people and the our witness to him through the quality of our words.
- What does it mean to be “loyal” to him in action: the people we standby even when that is costly, our willingness to go out in his name even when it would be more comfortable to stay put!

We may even find that we have to confess the times when we have been disloyal:

- the idleness and unthinking unkindness of our thoughts
- the words that have wounded and betrayed
- the actions which have been selfish and lacking generosity
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“All we like sheep have gone astray” yet, in his kindness, God in Christ welcomes us as once again we turn to him and find in him new life, new strength, new love.....

I suspect that even Judas is offered that new life and we may ask that he, with us, may be brought back to life through grace, through the sheer generosity of God’s love.

Amen.