Tuesday of Holy Week

Gospel text (*Jn* 13:21-33.36-38): Reclining at table with his disciples, Jesus was deeply troubled and testified, “Amen, amen, I say to you, one of you will betray me.” The disciples looked at one another, at a loss as to whom he meant. One of his disciples, the one whom Jesus loved, was reclining at Jesus’ side. So Simon Peter nodded to him to find out whom he meant. He leaned back against Jesus’ chest and said to him, “Master, who is it?” Jesus answered, “It is the one to whom I hand the morsel after I have dipped it.” So he dipped the morsel and took it and handed it to Judas, son of Simon the Iscariot. After Judas took the morsel, Satan entered him. So Jesus said to him, “What you are going to do, do quickly.” Now none of those reclining at table realized why he said this to him. Some thought that since Judas kept the money bag, Jesus had told him, “Buy what we need for the feast,” or to give something to the poor. So Judas took the morsel and left at once. And it was night.

When he had left, Jesus said, “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and he will glorify him at once. My children, I will be with you only a little while longer. You will look for me, and as I told the Jews, ‘Where I go you cannot come,’ so now I say it to you.”

Simon Peter said to him, “Master, where are you going?” Jesus answered him, “Where I am going, you cannot follow me now, though you will follow later.” Peter said to him, “Master, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.” Jesus answered, “Will you lay down your life for me? Amen, amen, I say to you, the cock will not crow before you deny me three times.”

“It was night”

Fr. Jean GOTTIGNY
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Today, on Holy Tuesday, the liturgy places the emphasis on the drama that is about to unfold and that will culminate in the crucifixion of Good Friday. “So Judas took the morsel and left at once. And it was night” (Jn 13:30). It is always night when someone turns away from the One who is “Light from Light, true

God from true God" (Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed).

The sinner is the one who turns his back on the Lord in order to revolve around created things, without referring them to their Creator. Saint Augustine describes sin as "love of self even to the contempt of God." In short, a betrayal. A falling away born of "the arrogance which makes us want to be liberated from God and left alone to ourselves, the arrogance which makes us think that we do not need his eternal love, but can be the masters of our own lives" (Benedict XVI). We can understand why Jesus, that night, was "deeply troubled" (Jn 13:21).

Fortunately, sin does not have the last word. That belongs to God's mercy. But it presupposes a "change" on our part. A reversal of direction that means detaching ourselves from creatures in order to bind ourselves to God and thus rediscover authentic freedom. Yet let us not wait until we are disgusted with the false freedoms we have embraced before turning back to God. As the Jesuit Father Bourdaloue warned, "we would like to convert when we are tired of the world—or rather, when the world has grown tired of us." Let us be wiser. Let us decide now. Holy Week is the fitting time.

On the Cross, Christ stretches out His arms to everyone. No one is excluded. Every repentant thief has a place in paradise—provided he changes his life and makes reparation, like the one in the Gospel: "And indeed, we have been condemned justly, for the sentence we received corresponds to our crimes, but this man has done nothing criminal" (Lk 23:41).

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- "It is better for me to die on behalf of Jesus Christ than to reign over all the ends of the earth.... Him I seek, who died for us: him I desire, who rose again for our sake... Permit me to be an imitator of the Passion of my God." (Saint Ignatius of Antioch)

- "The Upper Room reminds us of sharing, fraternity, harmony and peace among ourselves. How much love and goodness has flowed from the Upper Room! How much charity has gone forth from here. All the saints drew from this source." (Francis)

- "It is precisely in the Passion, when the mercy of Christ is about to vanquish it, that sin most clearly manifests its violence and its many forms: unbelief, shunning and mockery (...). However, at the very hour of darkness, the hour of the prince of this world, the sacrifice of Christ secretly becomes the source from which the forgiveness of our sins will pour forth inexhaustibly." (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, Nº 1851)

Other comments

“Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him.”

Fr. Lluís ROQUÉ i Roqué
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Today, we are given to contemplate Jesus in the darkness of His Passion days. Darkness that will be over when He will exclaim: “It is finished” (Jn 19:30); as of that moment, Easter's light will flare up. In Easter's glowing night —in opposition to the darkness of the vigil of his death— Jesus' words will become true: “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him.” (Jn 13:31). We can indeed say that each step Jesus takes is a step from death to Life and it has a Paschal character, expressed by an attitude of total obedience to the Father: “Behold, I come to do your will.” (Heb 10:9); attitude corroborated by words, gestures and deeds which are opening the way to his glorification as the Son of God.

Today, we also contemplate the person of Judas, the traitor apostle. And his heart, full of evil intentions he is seeking to dissimulate; hypocritically, he is also trying to cover up the greediness that rules and blinds him, despite he is so close to him, who is the Light of the world. In spite of being surrounded by Light and exemplar unselfishness, for Judas “it was night” (Jn 13:30): thirty silver coins, “the devil's excrement” —as Papini qualified money— have dazzled and gagged him. Dominated by avidity, he betrays and sells Jesus, the most honored amongst honored men; but Judas experienced despair too, for money is not everything and it can definitely enslave us.

Finally, we consider Peter with attention and devotion. Everything in him is good will, love, generosity, simplicity, nobility... He is Judas' counterpoint. It is true that three times Peter denied Jesus, but his intentions were not mean; he just did it out of cowardice and human feebleness. “He denied him for the third time, and when Jesus Christ looks at him, he immediately cried, and bitterly he cried” (Saint Ambrose). Peter's remorse and repentance was sincere as shown by his excruciating pain full of love. This is why, Jesus afterwards, reaffirmed him in the vocation and in the mission He had prepared for him.