

April 9, 2020 Holy Thursday

Exodus 12:1-8, 11-14; 1Cor: 23-26; John 13:1-15

Before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from the world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, to betray him.

Matthew mentions that Jesus said: "One of you will betray me." The disciples anxiously asked: "Is it I, Lord?" Jesus said: "He who dipped his hand with me in the dish, will betray me. The Son of Man goes even as it is written of him; but woe to that man through whom the Son of Man is betrayed. It would be better for that man if he had not been born."

Judas, who betrayed him, answered, "It isn't me, is it Rabbi?"

Jesus said to him: "You said it." (Matt 26:223-25)

Jesus pointed out how, at this very moment, Judas sat at table with Jesus and the other disciples clearly identified as the one who would betray Jesus and hand him over to the authorities.

As they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks for it and broke it. He gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." He took the cup, gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, "All of you drink it, for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many for the remission of sins." (Matt. 26: 26-28)

So, where was Judas? The answer is, according to Matthew, Mark and Luke, he was sitting right there at that same table. I don't see anything in the texts to indicate that Judas left the table or the room. There's certainly nothing to suggest that Jesus asked Judas to leave.

I think that this may be one of the Gospel messages for today: that there is a place at the table for Judas. Despite what he was going to do, there was a place in Jesus's heart for him. Judas participated at the table of the Last Supper with Jesus and the rest of the disciples. He got to eat and drink with the others.

What Good News.

We may have had the impression that Judas left before the meal was complete. But three Gospel accounts (the

Synoptics) indicate that Judas did not leave until after the supper. According to John, Judas left before the supper was ended.

What are you going to do with Judas? Are we, you and I, going to condemn him? Or will we see him in a different light?

None of us live up to our Baptismal commitment. All of us are sinners, so we have to be careful and not answer too quickly. Are we worthy to sit at the table of Jesus? Yes, I think so. Because Jesus has redeemed us by dying on the Cross for us. Our sins are forgiven. God, our Creator, our abba Father, loves all of us. God loves us unconditionally.

And as Pope Francis says: The name of God is mercy.

- Fr. Ed Debono, OFM Conv.