



**V**ERILY, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.* Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake. Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it? Jesus answered, *He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it.* And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, *Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him. Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you. A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.* (John 13:20-26, 31-35)

#### **The Collect**

*Saint John the Evangelist*

**M**ERCIFUL Lord, we beseech thee to cast thy bright beams of light upon thy Church, that it, being illumined by the doctrine of thy blessed Apostle and Evangelist Saint John, may so walk in the light of thy truth, that it may at length attain to life everlasting; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

#### **The Collect**

*Christmas Day*

**A**Lmighty God, who hast given us thy only-begotten Son to take our nature upon him, and as at this time to be born of a pure virgin; Grant that we being regenerate, and made thy children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit; through the same our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the same Spirit ever, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

Betrayal of the Lord Jesus Christ brings the ultimate disgrace and condemnation to the traitor. We may consider, with a narrow look, the sin of Judas; but we also must look beneath his vestiture to see our own countenance there. His betrayal of the Lord was so contemptible that we shun the mention of his name. His act of betrayal was flagrant and heinous, abject and final. Yet, Peter also betrayed Christ in his thrice denial of having even known the Man three times in the night of His betrayal. Was there a great difference? Of course, there was a difference of tremendous proportions in intent and in motive. Though we may not know the evil heart of Judas as the Lord knew, we do know that Judas conspired with the enemies of Christ in premeditation of his betrayal of Him. Further, we know that Judas had a profit motive in negotiating the betrayal for thirty pieces of silver. And, lastly, we know that Judas never repented to God for his grave sin (he repented in himself which is not repentance before God). Peter shed grievous tears at his third denial of the Lord: *And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, **Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.** And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.* (Luke 22:61-62) Judas betrayed with a sly kiss – Peter with bitter tears of repentance – Judas with knowledge afore thought, Peter in fear and trembling. Christ knew the heart of Judas and saw that it was bad from the beginning. Though the betrayal by Judas was a necessary act to bring about the fulfillment of prophecy, this does not exonerate the evil heart from due judgment and punishment. Judas, and his black heart, is still with us in our churches today. Those black hearts are set on the money bag and will sell the Lord's name for a few pieces of silver.

Perhaps the best understanding of the betrayal of Christ is not that which is said, but that which is not included in today's lectionary text.. The preceding two verses set the stage for the betrayal: *I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me. Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he.* (John 13:18-19) Many take bread in the Communion to their own detriment – it happens every observance in most churches. Men take with their lips the Bread of Heaven and, yet, have hidden away a wedge of gold, and commit the sin of Achan. The heel of Judas is transformed into the heel of Satan and its owner is reprobate. Not included in today's Gospel text, too, are the four verses following the revelation of Judas as the traitor: *And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, **That thou doest, do quickly.** Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him. For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor. He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night.* (John 13:27-30) Here we see another difference in Peter and Judas: Satan enters into Judas and finds a home in his heart. No one at the table could comprehend the Lord's meaning in His counsel to Judas. Today, God speaks clearly to us and we, too, often fail to grasp His clear counsel. Judas was the man who kept the money bag for the group. Da Vinci portrays Judas prominently clenching the money bag next to a spilled salt shaker in the Last Supper – an excellent and symbolic depiction. In this masterpiece, all faces are reflecting light except for Judas' face which is in the shadow of darkness that portends his future abode.

*He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night.* Please try and grasp the significance of this last verse. ALL who betray the Lord with full premeditation will go out, not only into the created night, but into the eternal night of the soul. Unlike that Dark Night of the Soul described by St John of the Cross, there is no virtuous outcome.. The darkness is complete and unending for those who are the finally and eternally damned.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. The authority of Heaven is like a military chain-of-command. The Constitution (the Word of God) defines the authority being conveyed and its limits. The Executive Office (President, or the Lord by the Word of God, Jesus), being Commander-in-Chief, grants commissions to his trusted officers (apostles and adherents) to act on His behalf. The authority granted the believer is complete as long as exercised within the boundaries specified by that Word of God (Constitution). Though this is only an illustration, it helps us to understand the concept of delegated authority. We are to know those whom the Lord has sent by confirming all that they teach by Holy Writ, and then receive them as the vicegerents of Christ to believe and hear according to the expression of God's Holy Word. And the only way that we can know and receive God the Father is by knowing and receiving God the Son. There is NO other way. There is no chosen race of people apart from those who receive the Son.

When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. Consider how awful are we hurt when, knowing beforehand, the treachery of a close friend, we are so profoundly hurt by the open betrayal of that friend. Imagine the pain in the heart of Christ in knowing the dark intentions of Judas who had every privilege to know the perfect Gospel of Christ and, yet, still betrayed Him. His hurt was not for Himself, but for that familiar face that had followed Him closely. He saw the enormity of Judas' sin and its consequence. He was pained for Judas because He knew the fate that Judas would face at the Hands of an Angry Father.

Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake. This is perhaps a defense mechanism on the part of the disciples. When betrayal among friends is discovered, do we not all look at the other person as if it could never have been US? We have all betrayed our Lord in one way or another – perhaps by a careless word or thoughtless deed which would cause the unbeliever to doubt the strength of our conviction or the One in whom we trust. So we immediately and instinctively look to others when sin is revealed: 'It could not be ME, Friend. It MUST be another!'

Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. What a remarkable manner to express the particular love Christ has for the author of this Gospel! John did enjoy a special kind of profound love from Christ. But John was also a humble fellow who would have hesitated to boast of his own name in the matter. He avoids the direct reference by lovingly putting forward only the relationship and not the name. John's love for Christ was undimmed. It carried John through perilous years that followed. Even in writing these words, it is apparent that John cherished the memory of the night he rested his head on the bosom of Christ. That love gave John the courage to stand at the foot of the Cross during the passion of His Lord and not hide in the bushes as many did. It is so comforting for us to know that we can experience the same privilege with John. It is only Christ who will console at our gravest hour.

Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. I have known men like Peter – strong, resolute, and impulsive. They are good men in their hearts, full of confidence until a passing moment of weakness and human frailty is found in them. Such good men may be undeservedly blamed for the very weakness that lies hidden in the soul of every man and woman. Peter, knowing of his own reputation of being presumptuous, will now use a go-between (John) to discover the identity of the traitor.

He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it? John has a young and innocent heart. He does not beat around the bush by asking, Is it I? He simply asked, Who is it? Christ now gives a perfect intimation of who the traitor is. It amazes me that

many still did not 'get it!' *Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it.* This is so abundantly clear. Perhaps our hindsight gives us such a great advantage that we wonder why the disciples did not immediately burst out with condemnatory threats to Judas. *And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.* This followed hard on His comment to John of the identifying mark of the traitor. We are then told that Satan entered into Judas and he went out immediately into that eternal night of darkness. Up until this point, Judas might have repented and turned from his plan, but now, he is possessed, by his own invitation, of the devil. He will not turn back now. All who partake of the Lord's Supper and are bathed by Him shall not necessarily be clean and whole. This is obvious from the observance of the sins of the modern church.

*Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him.* The willing and selfless sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross at Calvary was a fulfillment of His Father's Word from the beginning at the Garden in Eden. Christ made good on His Father's promise and thereby glorified the Father in Will and Deed. We cannot be greater than the Father and Maker of all. If we glorify Him, He shall always respond in like manner. Christ glorified the Father and was promptly glorified by the Father. Christ, being in the Father, experienced a like glorification. This glorification to which Christ now refers seems to outweigh all others for this is the purpose for which He came into the world. We also have that privilege to be One in Christ as Christ is One with the Father. Are we?

*Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you.* The full panorama of the Cross, the Tomb, and the rolled away stone come before the eyes of Christ. He called the disciples, and us, little children. So we are! It reminds me of a loving father going away to war as he bids his children that he must go away for a time and they cannot follow. But he also assures the children that he shall return. We are all little children in the eyes of Christ. We lack strength, we lack courage, we lack understanding – but He also affords us the opportunity to use His strength, His courage, and His understanding and Will to remain stayed on Christ and His Word. Yes, the disciples shall afterwards seek Him, but they shall seek a dead body in the early morning Garden Tomb. Instead, they shall find a risen Lord! The Jews (Jewish religious leaders responsible for His crucifixion) could never go to where Christ is going. Though they may visit Hell, they cannot neither escape it or avoid it. They will not set foot on the opposite Banks of Jordan Waters. The disciples could not go where Christ was going at the moment, but they shall, in time, go there.

*A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.* This commandment is to facilitate the spiritual obedience of the other Commandments given by God. It was the one characteristic so painfully missing in the hearts of the scribes and Pharisees – Love. Love for one another in Christ is not an option, but a commandment. *Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.* (2 Cor 3:2-3) Christ did not abolish a single jot or tittle of the law, but made it more binding in love.

So, what is the evidence of our fellowship and Communion in Christ? *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.* This love of which Christ speaks is not a casual kind of love, but a sacrificial love. He said, *as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.* That is certainly more than a casual love. Christ died for us and we must be willing to lay down our lives, as well, for each other. *This is my*

*commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. (John 15:12-13) Do we?*