

## St. Louis Catholic Church

Wednesday of Holy Week  
Matthew 6:14-25

Spy Wednesday. The day we commemorate how Judas finalized his plot to betray Jesus into the hands of the chief priests. Greed, lack of faith in Jesus, weak and easily tempted by the powers to be all could have been the reason. It is awful to be betrayed by a loved one or a trusted friend. Christ, though divine, was also fully human and had to know the heartbreak and pain that can happen in a relationship. How blessed we are to know His empathy and compassion when we are inflicted with pain from any dearest relationships. It is interesting too that he leaves to betray Christ at the moment of the Eucharist being established. When Jesus had promised the Eucharist in John 6 many left and thought He was mad to say that He will give His flesh to eat. Christ spoke to Peter and said, "Do you want to leave?" Peter, with great trust, said "Where would we go, You have the words of everlasting life?"

Then Jesus said, "Have I not chosen you, the twelve? Yet one of you is a devil". And St. John comments, "He was speaking of Judas Iscariot, for he it was, though one of the twelve, who would betray Him".

It was from the supper table at which Jesus instituted the Eucharist that Judas left to carry out his betrayal. The impression, at least, is left that Judas turned traitor because he had failed to pass the supreme test of faith in the Eucharist. Tomorrow, Holy Thursday, we celebrate the Institution of the Eucharist. Let us take that occasion to profess our complete faith in Jesus, and let us pray that our faith will make us loyal and faithful to Him.

Judas was an apostle who failed. Down through the ages the successor to the apostles, our bishops, have been our shepherds. Certainly some, like some priests, have allowed their human weakness to betray God, the Church, and their friends. Of course, in every life style, people have failed and disappointed others. Sin touched the apostles, why not all of us?

Last night at the Chrism Mass I was reminded of how beautiful our faith is as Catholics. Gathered with our Shepherd, Bishop Steib--a successor to the twelve--the priests, deacons and laity expressed the Church around the table and celebrating the Eucharist. The Chrism Mass is the time that priests renew their vows and recommit their priesthood. We too are reminded that the laity share in the priesthood by their Baptism. People who minister in the name of Christ were gathered with all of us. We for a couple of hours were a mini-manifestation of the Church at its best.

Oil was brought forth to be blessed by the Bishop and then distributed to the parishes to celebrate the sacraments. We are extensions in our lives of the Bishop as High Priest and Shepherd of this local church. Oil of Catechumens is used in Baptisms. Oil of the Sick is for the Anointing of those sick, elderly or dying. St. James spoke of calling the priests when one is sick and let the priest pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of Jesus.

The third oil is the oil of Chrism. It is used in Baptisms, Confirmations, Ordinations to the Priesthood, and the dedications of churches, altars or sacred vessels--the people or objects

involved are themselves consecrated, set apart for use in the service of God. The oils of Catechumens and sick are simply blessed. The Sacred Chrism Oil is consecrated.

I watched Bishop Steib breathe over the oil and balsam to be consecrated. This is symbolic of his imparting the Spirit. The word Spirit comes from words in Latin, Greek and Hebrew that mean "wind" or "breath". We believe that our spiritual life, in some way, derives from our Bishop, who is ordained in a special way to be the Vicar of Christ for our Diocese. Therefore, as Christ breathed upon the apostles to give them the gift of His Spirit, so our Bishop breathes that same Spirit upon all those who will be baptized, confirmed or ordained priest this year.

See the beautiful connection. We are the Body of Christ. We are members, each with a distinct gift, ministry, talent, role, vocation, charism or ability. We are by the very nature of our Baptism united to Christ the Head who is seen by His vicar or apostle.

On this Spy Wednesday, it is a good time to question our loyalty to Christ. Christ is among us in His Church. He prayed that we be "one". When we see a person anointed this year in Baptism, Confirmation, Ordination or the Sacrament of the Sick, know that the strength and presence of Christ comes to that person through the office of Bishop.

Pray for Bishop Steib and all Bishops. You can't imagine the pressure and demands upon the office. He is appointed, called and ordained as our Shepherd by Jesus Christ through His Vicar--the Bishop of Rome.

He needs our prayer, support, encouragement, gratitude and loyalty. Certainly we can disagree with decisions or have troubles with issues. He and we are human. But we all are more than that. He and we are the Body of Christ. Judas fell because of his humanity. Our bishops and priests too are human. They need the strength and support that comes from prayer and loyal, devoted disciples. Laity can fail and imitate Judas when they divide the Church.

God bless the Church of Memphis, St. Louis Parish and the Roman Catholic Universal Church. God Bless Pope Benedict XVI, Bishop Terry Steib and all Bishops, the priests of Memphis and all over the world. God bless the religious priests, brothers and sisters. God bless our deacons--transitional and permanent. Let us pray for one another. Let us in this Holy Week remember who we are and whose we are!

I urge all to support the Bishop's Annual Appeal. We are One Faith--One Family. God's work in West Tennessee is done through the Catholic Diocese--all of us who are baptized Catholics--in union with our Shepherd. Unlike Judas, we are called to loyalty.

God Bless,  
Msgr. John McArthur

Key Events This Week:

1. Confessions  
Thursday 5:00-6:30 p.m.  
Friday 5:00-6:30 p.m.  
Saturday 2:30-4:30 p.m.
2. Holy Thursday Mass of Lord's Supper--7:00 p.m.
3. Good Friday

Stations of the Cross--3:00 p.m.

Passion of Lord--7:00 p.m.

4. Easter Vigil and Mass of Resurrection--Holy Saturday--8:00 p.m.

5. CBC/CBU graduates--please contact the church office with your contact information and any friends who also graduated CBU by emailing [jan.odonnell@stlouis.cdom.org](mailto:jan.odonnell@stlouis.cdom.org) or calling 682-6606.