

SERMON 848

Holy Wednesday

April 16, 2014

941st Week as Priest

767th Week at St Dunstan's

32nd Week at Epiphany-Tallassee

OUT OF HUMAN HANDS

Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

I believe now that Jesus knew precisely what was going to happen to him in the week following his entry into Jerusalem. I was one of his most trusted friends, one of the Twelve, as he called us, and yet we seemed to misunderstand or misinterpret the core message that he was telling us. It was as if we did not want to know.

He had spoken numerous times of the servant songs from Isaiah, and he said that his life was a fulfillment of those seven hundred year old prophecies. We were looking for a vision, a revelation, a non-literal way of interpreting the songs. "I gave my back to those who struck me," made us think of Israel in slavery in Egypt, but not our Lord. "I did not hide my face from spitting and insult," was outrageous. Who would show disrespect to such a loving and gentle man? We lived with hope that God would come to his rescue at any moment, that his angels would bring Jesus out of the pit and set him on a high place.

At supper that night, when he seemed so troubled, he told us all that one of the Twelve would be his betrayer. This was the worst, the unkindest cut of all. You know how that goes ... each of us was convinced that he would be the betrayer, through cowardice, or anger, or accident. Each of us felt that pitch past pitch of grief—I wished myself dead rather than hand Jesus over to his enemies. Peter spoke quietly to the Master. I saw him dip his bread in the dish, and then Judas Iscariot, who left quickly.

The days are moving very quickly, it seems. I cannot make sense of the accusations and plots. I cannot for the life of me understand why the priests and scribes would wish to harm our Lord. Surely the Pharisees are holy men! Surely they will not act unjustly!

But I have the feeling that this is all out of human hands, that no one has control over the outcome of the week. And so we pray for calm in the midst of a storm, for peace in the swirl of conflict, for a resolution to all difficulties. Surely God will not forsake us.

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