



The Holy See

MORNING MASS IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHA HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

"Judas, where are you?"

Wednesday, 8 April 2020

[\[Multimedia\]](#)

Introduction

Let us pray together today for people who during this time of the pandemic trade at the expense of the needy; who profit from the needs of others and sell them: the mafia, usurers and others. May the Lord touch their hearts and convert them.

Homily

Holy Wednesday is also called "Spy Wednesday", the day in which the Church underlines Judas's betrayal. Judas sells the Master.

When we think of the fact of selling people what comes to mind is the slave trade from Africa to America – something from the past – then the business, for example, of the Yazidi girls sold to the Daesh: but this is something far away, this is something... Even today people are sold. Everyday. There are Judases who sell their brothers and sisters, exploiting them for work, without a just pay, without recognising their duties. Many times they even sell their dearest things. I think that in order to have a greater convenience a person is able to take his parents away and not see them anymore; to take them far away to safe old-age homes and not visit them anymore... He is selling them. There is a very common saying that such a person is "capable of selling his or her own mother": and they sell her. Now they feel at peace, they are kept away: "You take care of them...".

Trafficking in human persons today is as it was in earlier times: it is done. And why is that? Jesus said why. He gave money the status of master. Jesus said: "You cannot serve God and money" (see *Lk* 16:13) - two masters. It is the only thing that Jesus compares, and each one of us needs to choose: either serve God and you will be free in adoration and service; or serve money and you will be a slave to money. This is the option; and many people want to serve both God and money. And this cannot be done. In the end they pretend to serve God in order to serve money. They are hidden exploiters, socially flawless, but under the table they even traffic in human beings: it does not matter to them. Human exploitation is selling one's neighbour.

Judas went away, but he left some disciples, who are not his disciples but the devil's. What Judas's life was like we do not know. He must have been a normal boy, perhaps, also with anxieties, because the Lord called him to be a disciple. He never never succeeded in being one. he did not have the mouth of a disciple and the heart of a disciple, as we heard in the first Reading. He was weak in his discipleship, but Jesus loved him... Then the Gospel makes us understand that he liked money. At Lazarus's house, when Mary anoints Jesus's feet with that expensive perfume, he makes the reflection and John emphasises: "But he did not say this because he loved the poor: he was a thief" (see *Jn* 12:6) His love for money had led him beyond the rules: to stealing, and from stealing to betraying there is only one step, a very small one. Those who love money too much betray in order to have even more, always: this is a rule, it is a matter of fact. Judas, perhaps a good boy, with good intentions, ends up as a traitor to the point of going to the market to sell: "He went to the chief priests and said 'What are you prepared to give me if I hand him over to you?'" (see *Mt* 26:14). In my opinion, this man was out of his mind.

One thing that draws my attention is that Jesus never called him a "traitor"; He says that He will be betrayed, but He never called him a "traitor". He never said: "Go away, traitor!" Never! Rather, He calls him "friend", and kisses him. The mystery of Judas: what is the mystery of Judas? I do not know... Fr. Primo Mazzolari explained it better than me... Yes, I take comfort in contemplating that capital at Vézelay: how did Judas end up? I am not sure. Jesus makes a strong threat, here; he makes a strong threat: "Woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed. It would be better for that man if he had never been born" (see *Mt* 26:24). But does this mean that Judas is in Hell? I do not know. I look at the chapter. And I hear Jesus's word: "friend".

But it makes us think of another thing, that is more real, more current: the devil entered Judas, it was the devil who lead him to that point. And how did the story end? The devil is a poor paymaster: he is not a reliable paymaster. He promises everything, shows you everything and in the end leaves you alone in despair to hang yourself.

Judas's restless heart is tormented by concupiscence and tormented by the love of Jesus - a love that failed to become love - tormented by this fog, he goes back to the priests and asks for forgiveness, asks for salvation. "What is that to us? It is your responsibility..." (see *Mt* 27:4): the devil speaks like this and leaves us in despair.

Let us think of the many institutionalised Judases in this world who exploit people. And think also of the small Judas that each one of us has within at the hour of choice: between loyalty or interest. Each one of us has the ability to betray, to sell, to choose for one's own interest. Each one of us has the opportunity to let ourselves be attracted by love of money or goods or future well-being. "Judas, where are you?" But I will ask each one of us: "You, Judas, the little Judas within me: where are you?"

Spiritual Communion

Those who cannot receive communion can now make a spiritual communion:

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Blessed Sacrament. I love you above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if you were already there, and I unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You.