

After reading for several weeks in the Gospel --stories that occurred after the Resurrection of Jesus – for the next two Sundays we go back in time – to words spoken to the disciples before his death and resurrection. In both cases, the encounters take place at John’s account of the last supper – which if you remember, is not the bread broken and wine poured out of Matthew, Mark, and Luke’s Gospel – but Jesus modeling service, by washing the feet of the disciples.

Today’s reading occurs after the meal and after the foot washing – and contains two departures – one of Judas, and the coming one of Jesus.

I always find it interesting that Jesus knew Judas was going to betray him --- and yet allowed Judas to stay at the last supper – as well as have his feet washed. I think Jesus was just giving Judas every opportunity possible – to soften his heart – instead of allowing satan to enter it. Not unlike the 2nd chances he gave Thomas and Peter, and he gives to us – to right our wrongs.

“When Judas had left them,” is how the Gospel begins today ---- and we all know what Judas left to do – to make arrangements with the Jewish authorities to turn Jesus over to them.

“Judas left them.” He could have left and done something good – something positive --- as was the disciples suspicion – that he was going off to do something for the poor. But instead, he goes off to do something bad – something negative – to set in motion his betrayal of Jesus. . . but he did have a choice as to what he was going to do: he just did not choose very wisely.

The other departure story contained in the Gospel is that of Jesus – who is preparing his disciples for the soon to be time of his death and resurrection – his time of glorification --- and then for the coming time of his being with them for “only a little while longer.”

Jesus wants the disciples to know he expects them to carry on his ministry: to do what he has been doing. And so he tells them: “as I have loved you, so you also should love one another.”

Now we know from our Easter readings that the disciples did not stick with Jesus on the night of his arrest – the all ran for cover. They did not show their love and loyalty to Jesus by following him to the cross – only the disciple whom Jesus loved, usually identified as John, was the only one standing at the foot of the cross with Mary.

And they all hid themselves behind locked doors huddled in their doubts and fears after the resurrection. BUT EVENTUALLY, they got their act together, once they were empowered by the Holy Spirit – and got to work showing their love for one another by carrying out the ministry of Jesus.

So Judas had left them. And Jesus will leave them. And we will leave this place at the end of this liturgy --- and so who will we most be like after we leave: Judas, who goes out and does his own thing. . . or the disciples who eventually get their act together and work at showing their love for one another.

It is a choice that we get to make. Let’s choose wisely – and surprise everyone by getting our act together and loving one another.