

Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time: The Cost of Love

Today's readings speak about God's love. They began with *the Book of Exodus* and God reminding Moses that He had chosen the Hebrew people as His people. They did not deserve this choice. He chose them out of love. He saw Abraham's faith and responded with his love for Abraham and his progeny. The people witnessed this love when they were delivered from slavery and led through the desert to the Promised Land. God only asked them to remain faithful to Him, a response to his love that they often failed to keep.

St. Paul builds on the tremendous love of God in the second reading from the *Letter to the Romans*. Jesus died for us completely out of love for his father's people. When people were drowning in sin, he died for them. St. Paul notes that if Jesus had so much love for people who had rejected God, how much more must he love us who have committed ourselves to Him.

And finally in the Gospel reading, Jesus' heart was full of pity for the people who so longed for God but who had no one tell them the Good News. He chose twelve disciples, twelve following the foundation of Israel, the twelve tribes. He told them to go out, care for the people. Heal them. Proclaim to them the news that the Kingdom of God is upon them.

Among the Twelve there was Judas Iscariot. He is always mentioned last as the one who betrayed the Lord. Judas was one of the twelve who had received Christ's power to heal people and cast out evil from their lives. Yet, this was not enough for Judas. The lure of material profits, his recognition that following Jesus would cost him too much, perhaps even his own life, the ability to make money by betraying the Lord, were just some of the reasons why Judas rejected the Grace he had been given. Judas refused to love. Thus the contradiction in the moment of betrayal when Jesus asks, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?" Luke 22:48.

Love, true love, comes with a cost. You all know that. You love your children and, really, you don't care if they cost you sleepless nights from their infancy right through their Teen years, and beyond. I knew a wonderful retired business man, O.J. Sensenbrenner, God rest him, who used to say that he thought his children were expensive when they were home, but then they left and came back with their spouses and their children and became seriously expensive. But he never regretted the cost of love, nor do any of us.

We do not regret the cost of loving our children, our spouses, and especially, the cost of loving our God. We read about and even witness the martyrs' choice of God over their own lives. Yes, they are the heroes of our faith. But we can be heroes too. If we also were to lose our lives out of love for him, we know that we would only lose our physical lives. We are willing to pay the cost of love. The cost of love is our being in the world but not of the world. The cost of love is our being separate for the Lord, our being holy, for that is what it means to be holy. The cost of love is our being

mocked for our faith by the pseudo intelligentsia of the world. Our statement of love is our saying with Joshua, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Joshua 24:15.

Our response to God's love for us is so little in comparison to the extent of his love. It is so little, and, yet, it is so necessary. For there are many people who long to have meaning and purpose in their lives. There are many people who long to receive God's love. There are many people who can find God through us, the imperfect servants he sends to go into the fields of human beings and bring them his Love. In this way we are the Twelve. We are the New Israel. We are the People of God calling others to join the number of those being saved.

We pray today for the determination and the courage to be laborers in the Lord's fields.