

Lesson 26. . . Jesus Inaugurates the Eucharist
Gospel of Matthew



Notes From the Podium

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***These notes are intended to augment your own reading and study of the lesson.
Please use as an aid to help document the main message of the lecture.***

Matthew 26:1-75

- I. Recall Matthew 20
 - A. Jesus discusses the way in which the Son of God is going to suffer.
 1. At that very moment the mother of James and John asks Jesus to give her sons the seats on His right and left.
 2. It seems that the more love our Lord pours out, the more He is reviled and the more people do not seem to understand what is happening.
 3. In Matthew 26, we will see this same sort of obtuse behavior.
 - a. Jesus will describe the nature of his death and the way in which He will hand himself over in love.
 - b. Why is it at that moment that the disciples complain to Him about the waste of ointment?
 - c. They have so few days left with him, might there be anything *they* can give Him, spend on Him, the one that they love?
 - d. These are their precious last moments with Him.
 - i. “You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of man will be delivered up to be crucified.”
 - ii. They have two days left with them.
 - II. “Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, and took counsel together in order to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill Him.”
 - A. Why by “stealth”? -They don’t want to arouse the thousands of people there for Passover.
 - B. They will need to find him when He is alone with His apostles, they will need the help of someone close to Jesus, someone on the inside, a friend.
 - III. Now when Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, a woman came up to him with an alabaster flask of very expensive ointment, and she poured it on his head, as he sat at table.”
 - A. We know from St. John’s Gospel that this particular ointment was worth an entire year’s wage.
 - B. The disciples were indignant.
 1. “Why this waste? For this ointment might have been sold for a large sum, and given to the poor.”
 2. We love to cloak the poverty of our love with social justice.
 - a. We can’t love the man right in front of us so we love an abstraction, mankind.
 - b. We want to change social structures, not feed the person at our feet.

- c. When we have a lack of love for our Lord, we often cloak that poverty in a love for an abstraction which may make us feel good, but it is not love.
 - 3. This woman has taken an entire year's wage and poured it on the anointed one, the Messiah.
 - a. It is a statement of faith
 - b. Even more, it is a statement of love.
 - c. With only 2 days left with our Lord, how can the disciples see this act or faith and love a waste?
 - C. In all the Scriptures, where does anyone give our Lord an unsolicited act of love?
 - 1. She doesn't ask Him for anything, He has no expectations of her, she simply anoints Him.
 - 2. She loves Him for no other reason than she wants to do so.
 - 3. Consider those discerning a vocation to religious life.
 - a. So often young men and women want our Lord to command them, "do this for me".
 - b. Why are there not more souls with the generosity this woman displays?
 - 4. Nowhere else in Scripture does Jesus say, "She has done a beautiful thing to me."
 - a. He receives with joy the love she pours out on Him.
 - b. He even adds, "wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told, in memory of her".
 - c. When we love Him with generosity, He will receive our love and count it as beautiful.
 - 5. Contrast Judas Iscariot and the woman with the ointment.
 - a. The woman pours an entire year's wage over our Lord with a generous, unsolicited love.
 - b. Judas, for just 30 pieces of silver (the price for a slave's life), betrays Him.
 - c. She gave freely, not counting the cost; Judas asked, "What are you willing to give me if I hand Him over...?"
- VI. The Passover Meal/ The Last Supper
- A. As they were eating Jesus says, "Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me."
 - B. Immediately, each apostle, except Judas, replies with sincerity asking, "Is it I, Lord?"
 - 1. Implication: They knew they were capable of betraying Him.
 - 2. St. Philip Neri is known to wake up in the morning and say "Lord watch out, because today Philip will betray you."
 - 3. We, who have been invited into His friendship, are the first ones capable of betraying Him.
 - C. "He, who has dipped his hand in the dish with me, will betray me...It would have been better for that man if he had not been born."
 - 1. It is at this point, after the other 11 have asked with no confirmation from Jesus, that Judas finally asks, "Is it I, Master?"
 - 2. Our Lord would not reveal Judas.
 - a. Jesus never said to the disciples that Judas was the one about to betray Him.
 - b. He would not uncover the Judas' shame; one wonders if Jesus is baiting him.

- c. Our Lord simply answers the question, “Is it I, Master”, by saying “You have said so.”
- D. “Take, eat; this is my body.”
 - 1. The Church has always seen the institution of the Lord’s Supper as the very same moment in which the apostles became priests.
 - a. The apostles cannot continue to “do this in memory...” of Him without being given the power to do so.
 - b. And so it is that the Holy Mass and Holy Orders are both instituted in one act.
 - 2. Recall in vs. 16 that Judas “sought an opportunity to betray Him”.
 - a. Judas was looking for the right moment.
 - b. At the very moment that the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is inaugurated.
 - i. Jesus is handing Himself over to the apostles in the sacrament of love.
 - ii. Judas is handing Him over to the chief priests and scribes.
 - c. How consequently necessary was the betrayal.
 - i. The betrayal led to the crucifixion.
 - ii. The fruits of the crucifixion and resurrection are Jesus’ body and blood that He hands over at the Last Supper and at every Mass.
 - iii. There could be no Sacrifice of the Mass without Christ’s death and resurrection; there could be no death and resurrection without crucifixion; there could be no crucifixion without betrayal.
 - iv. Judas’ betrayal at that moment is the very thing that enables our Lord to say “This is my body” and “This is my blood”, making present His sacrifice on the day *before* He would die.
- E. The events of Holy Thursday until Easter Sunday are all one act.
 - 1. The Sacred Triduum - The *hour* of His passion took three days.
 - a. Holy Thursday – His Passion begins with the Mass of the Lord’s Supper.
 - b. Good Friday - That same Mass continues as we watch/contemplate His sacrifice, in the Veneration of the Cross.
 - c. Easter Vigil – That Mass continues, but we are now taking the vantage point of redeemed souls.
 - 2. At the Last Supper, just as in the Mass
 - a. Christ in His glorified body comes down and hands Himself over, but to do so necessitates the cross.
 - b. He cannot give His body to the apostles or us unless he first gives it over on the cross and raises it up.
 - c. “Drink of it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant,” (There is no forgiveness of sins without shedding of blood.)
- VIII. “And when they had sung a hymn they went out to the Mount of Olives.
 - A. The Hallel = Psalm 113 and part of our Sanctus
 - B. “You will all fall away because of me this night; for it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’”
 - 1. Minutes before he falls away, Peter declares, “... I will never fall away.”
 - 2. Peter depended upon his own strength and his strength failed.
 - 3. Those who think themselves most secure are the least saved.
- IX. “Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane,”

- A. "Gethsemane" = olive mill.
- B. He takes with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee,
 - 1. Note that these same three sons were with Him at the transfiguration,
 - a. There they saw the glory of the risen Son.
 - b. They could not stand under the weight of the voice of the Father.
 - 2. Now the Son is going to go speak to his Father again.
 - 3. In some sense, He is transfigured again before them, sweating blood.
 - a. In this garden, He will drink the sins of the world, taking to Himself the sinfulness of every man and woman that has ever existed.
 - b. It is the juxtaposition of knowing the Father's love and at the same time bearing the weight of the sins of the world that causes the sweating of blood.
- C. "Sit here, while I go yonder and pray."
 - 1. He brings them with Him a little further and they fall asleep – three times.
 - 2. Perhaps this is why Peter denies him three times.
 - a. Three times our Lord tells him to stay awake, watch and pray that they "might not enter into temptation".
 - b. Three times he was led into temptation and each time he denied Jesus.
 - c. In an awful reversal of what our Lord says to the foolish virgins, Peter says, "I do not know Him".
- D. "So, could you not watch with me one hour?"
 - 1. Evil was not sleeping and the apostles were not vigilant, except one.
 - a. One apostle was very vigilant.
 - b. At that moment he was with the guards coming to take the Lamb.
 - 2. Jesus prays, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, thy will be done" and again He finds them sleeping.
 - 3. Asleep a third time - "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest?"
- IX. Behold, the hour is at hand... Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand."
 - A. Note that he says let us go to *meet* them.
 - B. Judas came with a great crowd bearing swords and clubs.
 - C. Judas' sign: "The one I shall kiss is the man; seize him."
 - 1. It was dark; he would have to get close to Him to find Him. *This is the point.*
 - 2. Making his sin all the more heinous, Judas betrays Him with a sign of intimacy, of friendship, of love.
 - 3. He said, "Hail, Master!" And he kissed him."
 - D. Our Lord responds, "*Friend*, what are you doing here?"
 - 1. Despite Judas' actions, Jesus' actions toward Judas do not change.
 - 2. Judas does not dictate the heart of the Son of God.
 - 3. Recall the parable of the wedding feast: The king sees someone not properly clothed and says, "Friend, what are you doing here?"
 - 4. By calling Judas "friend", Jesus is reminding Judas of the closeness of their friendship.
 - a. Perhaps go draw him out.
 - b. But to no avail as He then says, "Do that for which you have come."
 - E. "Then they came up and laid hands on Jesus... one of those who were with Jesus ...struck the slave of the high priest, and cut off his ear..."

1. Jesus said, "Put your sword back... Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?"
 2. Jesus said, "...all this has taken place, that the scriptures...might be fulfilled."
 3. Then all the disciples forsook him and fled."
 - a. Peter was willing to take the life of someone else but not to give his own.
 - b. The shepherd was struck and the sheep were scattered.
 - c. Now He is alone.
- F. "Then those who had seized Jesus led him to Caiaphas the high priest,"
1. "Tell us if you are you the Christ, the Son of the living God?"
 2. The very words which Peter said by revelation of the Father,
 3. But this time, Peter is nowhere to profess it.
 - a. Peter was at a distance here, perhaps beholding, watching.
 - b. *Lk 22:61-62* – "And the Lord turned and looked at Peter... and he went out and wept bitterly."
 - c. Our Lord must be the one to give the profession of "faith".
- G. "And the high priest said to him, "I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God."
1. Jesus replies, "You have said so."
 2. He said the same words to Judas in reply to, "Is it I, Master?"
 3. The confession of sin and the confession of faith must come from another.
 4. Our Lord did not simply tell us who He is and demand that we receive Him.
 - a. He offers Himself to us; reception must come from the interiority of man.
 - b. The gift of faith is placed inside of man then it must be professed/ confessed by man.
 - c. This is why at mass we say "we" in everything except the Confiteor and the Creed.
 - d. Only "I" can confess my sins and profess my faith.
- H. "... You will see the Son of man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven."
1. The high priest tore his robes,"
 - a. This was the prophecy of the Messiah from Daniel 7.
 - b. "He has uttered blasphemy...What is your judgment?"
 2. He deserves death."
 - a. Note the cause/motive of our Lord's death is His Sonship.
 - i. The profession that He is the Son of the Father.
 - ii. He is dying for Sonship and so will every martyr die professing the sonship of Christ.
 - iii. Steven is the first.
 - b. To profess the faith is to profess Christ's Sonship; to live for the faith is to become sons; to die for him is to die for sonship,
- I. Peter denies Jesus 3 times.
1. He begins by confusion, "I don't know what you're talking about."
 2. Then he swears, offering an oath, putting his soul on the line, "I do not know the man."

- a. Denial begins with something so small, pretending confusion. Then we take an oath saying we don't know him and then we begin to curse ourselves.
- b. The further we distance ourselves from the Son of God, the more vile we become.
3. Immediately the cock crowed.
4. "Peter remembered the saying of Jesus...and he wept bitterly" (Tears of contrition.)
5. Attrition vs. Contrition
 - a. Attrition means you are sorry because you fear hell and don't want to lose Heaven.
 - b. Contrition is being truly sorry for having offended God, whom you love above all things.
 - i. Contrition is the reason that Peter is St. Peter and not Judas.
 - ii. Just contrition - to see and to hold the face of the Son and to say, I know you, I'm sorry and to weep.
 - iii. Contrition leads to Peter's salvation; he is contrite in the face of the one that he loves.