

St Pius & St Anthony Homily 5th Sunday Easter Year C (2025) Luke

What an opening line in today's gospel, mentioning Judas! Jn 13:31 said, "When Judas left...." (Also what a *downer* to start out with!) That reminds me of statements some people make at dinner tables, that always elicits a reaction from me like "Oh, don't do that!"; when they say, "*Maybe I shouldn't say this while we are eating,*" Right, don't say it....but they go ahead and do it anyway! Or maybe they start out, '*I know we just ate, but*' I want to say, "*Staw-aw-aw-p.....*"

But today's gospel, the first words out of the chute, are "When JUDAS left..." and we know what that means (the apostles seem confused about what Judas is up to, but Jesus had just predicted his own betrayal by one of them—Peter inquires who it could be and Jesus says, "The one I hand my bread to" and it is Judas! So Jesus says to him straight up -"What you are going to do, do quickly...." (Jn 13:26-27), like when taking bad medicine, you want to get it over with and move on!

To accentuate the negative right out of the gate, the previous verse to today's opening line, announced that when Judas stepped out, '**It was night!**' (Jn 13:30) Yes, Dark things go on, in the dark! So there is a down draft of doom here as the reading opens, "When Judas left...." That means: It is really on, NOW. Jesus hour has come. It's on and it's about, to go down!

Yet, what's remarkable to me, though, is how considering the impending storm cloud, and this attempted 'rain on Jesus' parade', the clouds actually lift, even if only for a while at the Last Supper and Jesus really shines. What a contrast between the gravity, of this punch in Jesus' gut, but then His turning it all around to be an occasion of GLORY. And not a little glory. Did you catch how often Jesus used the word 'Glory' just now? We heard it five times in just two verses (vs 31-32). Glory! In the same scene of Judas' treachery & betrayal, we don't have to get soured over gloom ...*it amounts to who you focus on!* Actually, the gloomy cloud is lifting as Judas leaves out to seal the deal with the Temple and sell Jesus out. Judas leaves and the dark storm leaves with him. That reminds me of the little character (as a kid, I loved him) in the Peanuts Charlie Brown cartoons. The little guy named 'Pigpen' – the poor soul who always had the dust cloud stirred up around him. It surrounded him, even if standing still, there would be swirls of darkdust, always circling him like buzzards. Nothing against him, but the shade-cloud was always on-all over him. That is what's happening here - Judas leaves the room, and the dark clouds break and the shining light pierces through again! That's why we get all of the glory talk from Jesus. This is Jesus hour! His hour of Glory now. (Recall the many times already in John's gospel when Jesus mentioned, "It is not my hour..." such as at Cana wedding miracle (Jn 2:4, also 7:30 8:20, 12:23) Well, that is all changed when Judas forces the issue, betraying and handing Jesus over to the Jewish and Roman elite. What should be the darkest hour, is in fact the brightest hour for us (*this is similar to why such a 'terrible deed day' as Good*

Friday is still called 'GOOD – it is pain for Jesus but so good for us – good shines the greatest in the presence of its persecution) The rock-metal music group 'Disturbed' says it in their song titled "Light"- they sing, "Darkness.....can show you the light" So, Jesus shines here! He uses the word glory five times in 2 verses! But what exactly is 'Glory'? I suggest what we mean by the word glory is all about revelation recognition, highlighting, illuminating, spotlighting, that glory connotes radiance, brilliance, luminescence, splendor—Jesus is really shining strongly here.

But we might ask, "What specifically is highlighted- showcased to be seen here?" The Love of Jesus' Cross! This is the uniquely Christian Revelation! Jesus teaches (not just with the words He is about to utter, but with the work of His coming cross-His dying to love us through everything) The real glory here is Jesus' new command – what does He say? "Love one another" and what does it look like but Him—"Love one another, AS I have loved you." Here's a deep contrast for us to realize-how serious He is about this NEW LOVE. This new command, is sandwiched in between two of the worst sin-offenses-attacks against Him. First, this one with Judas, where Jesus all but tells Judas, "I know exactly what you are doing to me." Right after that, Jesus says "love one another" and then, Jesus will proceed to talk with Peter, confronting him, that Peter is about to deny friendship or knowledge of Jesus publicly, not once but three times stating it (Jn 13:38)! So, right between these two 'tough love' confrontations, Jesus teaches his New Command, to love one another as He loves us (even through denial and betrayal- love to death and even die to self, and this is the part that might get us----loving others, **who may not love you back**). This is the real glory of God revealed – loving when it hurts, loving when it is not reciprocated, loving selflessly even if it is not recognized by the other person. That is Christian love. Jesus loves Judas, Jesus loves Peter and we have to remember (*I don't mean to to pile on and make Judas and Peter's sins worse*) but when do these sins of theirs offend Jesus? Right after Jesus had just fed them all at this Last Supper *and had even 'washed their feet'* (Jn 13:14) and this is what they do? But Jesus would not have us focus on and gang up on their sins, He would have us keep doing what He did—loving, serving sacrificing, and even dying for the good of others- to help them know the Living God! Our God who is Love and the God who cannot be killed off – No, Love always rises again. That is why today's reading ends with Jesus saying, "This is how all will know that you are my disciples" (Jn 13:35) He is meaning, "This is how the world will know, meet and come to me", through this remarkable, revelatory shining example of divine love- Jesus' sacrificial love. God is revealed, made known, and shines in the altruistic self-giving care given by Christians to others (not for any reward, or recognition or return – but simply because this is what Jesus does-He forgives, He loves, He's forever serving....to the end!) That shines brightly to all. Where else do you see that level goodness in the world? It is God, It is Jesus in His

believers, hearing these words of Jesus and following through (loving even their enemies). St Paul sums this up splendidly in his letter to the Romans 5:8 *“God proves His love for us in that **while we were still sinners** Christ died for us.”* He died for us, “Not on our good day”, “Not when we were on our best behavior”, but when “we were still sinning”, when we had turned against him or denied him (think Judas and Peter), it is then that Jesus dies for us (like back in Holy Week when we heard Him pray, “Father forgive them” **while His attack and crucifixion was still happening**). That is God’s glory, His shining stronger than any darkness, to break through sin (Judas is run off to betray him, and Peter is about to deny him, and Jesus loves all through it). Well, Jesus shares that glory with us, and asks- **commands** us to follow Him. To love the same. He is raised up in glory (Jn 12:32, & 3:14, 8:28) and He raises us up that we might love like Him.