

Today the experience of betrayal comes very close. We may think of this infidelity to Christ in many ways, none of which do us credit. I would like to import from the oncoming Easter Vigil that startling phrase which may illuminate even Judas:

*O happy fault:  
O necessary sin of Adam,  
which gained for us so great a Redeemer!*

This might be dismissed as rhetoric: when can any sin be happy, or necessary? The answer is: *When it is forgiven!*

Sin has about it something unique among all the evils that afflict us: in order to happen, sin must engage our love and be chosen by us. In this sense we ourselves are involved in it, and we need to be helped to come out of it, if possible intact. The sin of Adam, like all of our sins, is deeply connected to our being and nature, which God loves. Remember Eve, who was tempted: she saw that the fruit was good to eat: she saw that it was beautiful to look at; she saw that it was precious because it gave knowledge. Nothing wrong with any of that; as the serpent may well have remarked, *presentation is everything*. She listened to all her faculties: the appetitive, the aesthetic, and the spiritual; and in she went, hook, line, and sinker. The only thing she forgot was the voice of God, the commandment of the Creator, who had given her the faculties to make a choice with. She forgot what, or rather whom, she was *for*.

When sin is forgiven, it becomes a place of re-creation and of celebration; that is the story-line of the Prodigal Son, which is contained in germ by Jesus' words

*There is more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents  
than over ninety-nine just men who had no need of repentance.*

Written in lights, this means that the *redeemed* Creation holds a greater joy and beauty than the Creation before the Fall. The dark lessons that are taught through sin, the days spent in the pigsty, are made eloquent and infinitely precious because they are the process whereby our choosing is redirected, the place where we remember whom we are for, and where we begin to plan our return to the Father.

Judas turns the grace of Jesus down, for inscrutable reasons of his own; all we know is that we share in these false motives, because we too commit sin. Rather than building self-hatred and guilt into the fabric of our lives, and installing acid in our hearts, we should remember that we are *totally* dear to God who made us, and that even the faculties which seem to ensnare us in sin must become part of the way we are saved. Peter is worthy, but he hates the Cross. The young man in the Garden is worthy, but he runs away naked from the Passion. The Son of Man is glorified *not* by his disciples, but by Caiaphas, and Pilate, and the Roman Soldiers and their Centurion: by the howling mob, and by Judas Iscariot who handed him over to die and whose treacherous nature so shockingly mirrors God the Father, of whom it is written:

*God so loved the world,  
that he handed over his beloved Son  
that whoever believes in him might not perish,  
but have eternal life.*