

## Wednesday of Holy Week

Wednesday of Holy Week, the 31 March.

The University of Johannesburg choir conducted by Renette Bouwer sing the Kyrie from Missa De Meridiana Terra: Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy. These imploring words, which have been sung for centuries, are a reminder of the inexhaustible mercy of God, of God's unfailing compassion and forgiveness.

Today we return to the Last Supper of Jesus with his disciples... Today's reading is from the Gospel of John.

Matthew 26:14-25

Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, 'What will you give me if I betray him to you?' They paid him thirty pieces of silver. And from that moment he began to look for an opportunity to betray him.

On the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, 'Where do you want us to make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?' He said, 'Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, "The Teacher says, My time is near; I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples."' So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover meal.

When it was evening, he took his place with the twelve; and while they were eating, he said, 'Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.' And they became greatly distressed and began to say to him one after another, 'Surely not I, Lord?' He answered,

'The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born.' Judas, who betrayed him, said, 'Surely not I, Rabbi?' He replied, 'You have said so.'

People throughout the ages have asked the question, "Why does God allow so much suffering?"

And we might ask about this scene, "Why does Jesus let Judas do this to him?" . . .

Jesus has proclaimed God's Kingdom by word and deed. He has challenged the misuse of

religion to prop up unjust structures in Israel. Those who hold the power want rid of him. Now Jesus accepts the inevitable consequences of his life's mission. Listen again...

What is it like for Jesus to know that one of his closest friends will betray him?

We adore you O Christ, and we praise you

For by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world