

2ND SCRIPTURAL STATION - JESUS IS BETRAYED BY JUDAS
by Fr Robbie Low

(Mk 14 v 43 -46. Mt 26 v 47-56. Lk.22 v 47-53. Jn. 18 v 2-11)

(The case for the Defence)

I've had enough, I tell you.

It's enough to try the patience of a saint.

He knew when He chose me. The clue is in the name Sicarii, the rebel band, the revolutionary call to free our land of this imperial pagan curse. We are here to overthrow the idolaters, to restore our ancient kingdom, to bring back the government of God.

Where are our weapons? Where the secret gatherings of strength, the strategy of war, the secret signs that will alert the hidden forces to rise up and battle for the Lord? He missed the moment – if He ever intended to take it.

The entry by the Golden Gate, the prophecy fulfilled of Messianic return. The baying crowd eating out of His hand, their jackets flung in the street with branches of the palm to welcome the heir of David to His kingdom. Missed.

Sure, He 'cleansed' the Temple and then.....That very moment we could have rallied the world. Instead of which we sit and talk and heal and dine and indulge ourselves with lovesick women moping at His feet, spending a fortune on some 'dime store stink' and thoroughly embarrassing the other men.

I AM NOT DOING THIS BECAUSE I WANT TO.

I HAVE TO...TO SAVE THE REVOLUTION.

Only action will mean that we can take the streets.

Sure I took the money. How else could I authenticate my 'treason'?

Sure I was in charge of the Common Purse. 'A labourer', so Scripture says, 'is worthy of his hire'. So, yes, I took my share. You'd be amazed how profitable any religious racket can be.

Of course I believed Him in the early days but.....somehow it all began to drift.

I know where He will be. He loves the Olivet and tucking away for night time prayer amongst the grey green groves of Gethsemane.

I nearly bottled out of this. At supper. He knew. He always knows. Uncanny. He broke the bread and gave me the special morsel, the sign of closeness, intimacy, friendship. It nearly broke me. I had to steel myself to go into the night. I had to forget it to hasten my weary legs up to the waiting cabal of establishment conspirators.

Give me the gold, give me the silver. Pay me. I'll take you.

When the city wakes to news of His arrest the self -same crowds who mobbed us but a few short days ago will be up in arms and the revolt can begin. That's what I tell myself.

If not, then nothing lost. Just one more pretender overthrown. Back to the drawing board. The revolution will come – sooner or later it will come.

So we, the new 'we', me and the whole shooting match of guards and Temple police and 'narks' and 'jobsworths', set out for Olivet.

'How will we know in the dark which one is which?'

Simple.....He's the one I'll kiss.

It means nothing now. Yes, there was a time I loved Him, a time I would have died for Him but that was another lifetime now. It's just a greeting, an ironic sign, a nod toward history, a reminder of the promise - or a last farewell.

And so we came and found Him, on the move, the dreary, dopy, ramshackle, witless gang in tow. How I had come to despise them.

I could have led so much better than the idiot Peter or the other worldly John.

I held Him, touched Him, kissed Him. I can smell the scent of his robes even now, fresh laundry mixed with night dewed earth and manly sweat. His beard upon my cheek for this final time, His arms around me as if we were still friends. His gaze that still will not let me go.

'We seek Jesus of Nazareth', Captain Gormless cries.

I HAVE JUST KISSED HIM – for God's sake.

And Jesus replies so sure and clear. 'I AM HE'.

Not for the first time in my hearing He uses the divine name. But they have never heard it from the lips of anyone but the High Priest and that but once a

year and on the Day of Atonement. And so, Pavlovian response, they do the works.

DIVINE NAME proclaimed, they all step back and prostrate themselves. Only me and Him left standing. And He answers once again – the same.

‘I AM HE’.

Is He God? Am I wrong? Have I mistook? Is this the moment to stand and fight? Will the city rise? Will He live to thank me for my provocative perfidy? Will we grow old together in the city streets of this kingdom now restored and jest about this night’s confusion and the victory that was born in dark Gethsemane?

A brief scuffle with the permanently reactive ‘Rocky’ and then it’s over. A relatively quiet arrest. The gang scatters – no fight. Some half naked youth legs it out of the orchard. We proceed to the next stage.

I am now, apparently, superfluous to requirements.

My part is over? Was it for this? Only a pawn in their game.

You know the rest. I watched it pan out from afar. The night courts, the Romans, the orchestrated mob, the hill, the end. THE END. Amen

And threw the filthy money back in their salivating faces. I had no need of money now. I will take the short road home wherever home now is. If I mistook then I take the noble way out, self-slaughter.

You may revile me, doubt my sincerity, my courage – all. I was ready for the war but not this way, not this one. You need me as an excuse for each your own little betrayals of this Lord and sometime Master of my soul.

I stand now, ready to join Him in death. Take one small step from this wooden frame and embrace the collar of this suffocating cord into eternity – just another dangling man, halfway between the heavens and the earth.

I am Sicarii, the underground, the secret cell of assassins, the sons of revolution, untamed by peaceful Christs. Iscariot to you.

Not His Way but MY WAY. A new Master summons. I have no tears to save me. And so ‘Goodnight’.

The darkness falls.