

Mark 14: 26-31

26 When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. ²⁷And Jesus said to them, 'You will all become deserters; for it is written, "I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered."

²⁸But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.' ²⁹Peter said to him, 'Even though all become deserters, I will not.' ³⁰Jesus said to him, 'Truly I tell you, this day, this very night, before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times.' ³¹But he said vehemently, 'Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you.' And all of them said the same.

Meditation: Jesus is pretty blunt with his disciples isn't he – 'You will all become deserters...'? He knows what will happen. He knows that they may want to be faithful followers and good friends, but fear and terror have a way of interfering with deeper principles of courage, loyalty, commitment and faithfulness. It may also be that they were persistent in their refusal to accept what Jesus was telling them, namely, that the way to the kingdom was via the cross. This is not a great way to build earthly kingdoms and to market for success. Peter represents the disciples *in extremis*. 'Even though all become deserters, I will not.' Peter has a good heart, but he is ignorant of himself. He has failed to confront his weaknesses. Confronting one's fear and weakness is part and parcel of the way of the cross. Jesus on his part speaks no longer in parable or metaphor, but plainly: 'Truly I tell you, this day, this very night, before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times.' Peter refuses to accept this. He will die before he 'denies' Jesus. But who is in denial here?

What do you fear most right now in your life? Is it all the change that you anticipate will keep coming as life around us seems to have exploded? Or is it that too much is stuck in the same place and it's hard to know how to move it and change it step by step? Jesus has been telling the disciples that the cross is coming and it will be a huge ordeal for them as much as it means death for him. The meaning for them is giving up and letting go false and ego-driven dreams for their own destinies, trusting the more authentic and compassionate human beings they will become once stripped and ready to be filled by higher purposes for their lives. Fear is a big obstacle for that journey through death to resurrection.

Where is it that you and I are stuck? Where do we need to let go and submit to a stripping of falsity in us? Where do we need to trust the journey once we let go having to control it and letting it be, entrusting ourselves into hands greater than our own? Faith is grown in the crucible of doubt, self-questioning, uncertainty and letting go having to be in control. We grow in ways of becoming that enlarge us with courage and a comfort with our vulnerability, confidence and humility, gratitude and grace toward others, contentment and greater passion to serve, give and step out of our comfort zone as life demands it.

Prayer: We need you, O God... reveal yourself to us in this journey we're on right now... To every inner 'no' we are saying because we are afraid, may you grow in us enough

faith, hope and love to say 'yes.' To every 'yes' we are saying because we're afraid,
may you grow in us enough faith, hope and love to say 'no.' Amen.