

# Spy Wednesday: When Betrayal Met Divine Mercy

Gospel: Matthew 26:14–25

“Then one of the Twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, ‘What are you willing to give me if I hand him over to you?’ They paid him thirty pieces of silver...” (Matt 26:14–15)

## What Happened on Spy Wednesday?

Historically, Spy Wednesday marks the day Judas Iscariot went to the chief priests to **betray Jesus** for thirty pieces of silver—the price of a slave (cf. Exodus 21:32). This premeditated act of treachery—done in secret—earns this day the name “**Spy**” Wednesday (from the Old English *spien*, “to spy” or “to watch stealthily”).

According to the Gospel timeline, it was on this day that Judas, one of the Twelve, **sealed his decision** to betray the Lord. The **plot of the Passion** thus begins to unfold with a human act of betrayal—and yet, Jesus walks knowingly and willingly into it.

## Reflection: Betrayal and the Divine Response

Why did Judas do it? Was it greed? Disillusionment? Pride? The Fathers of the Church weigh in:



**St. John Chrysostom teaches:**

“The love of money made Judas a traitor... See how from being a disciple he became a betrayer; how from the height of honor he fell into the pit of perdition.” (*Homily 80 on Matthew*)

Chrysostom reminds us that **no one falls suddenly**—Judas had likely long nursed resentments and worldly ambitions. He wanted a *Messiah of power*, not a **Suffering Servant**.



**St. Augustine writes:**

“He followed the Lord not as a believer, but as a thief. He was with Him in body, not in heart.” (*Tractates on John 50.6*)

This distinction is crucial for apologetics: **external communion is not enough**; interior conversion is necessary. One can be near Jesus and still far from His Heart.



**St. Thomas Aquinas, in his *Catena Aurea*, highlights that Judas' sin was not simply betrayal, but despair after sinning:**

“Peter sinned, and Judas sinned. But Peter wept, and Judas hanged himself.”

Judas chose to **abandon mercy**, even after Jesus **offered it** at the Last Supper: “The Son of Man goes as it is written... but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed!”

## Why Does God Allow Betrayal?

Skeptics often ask, “*Why did Jesus choose Judas if He knew he would betray Him?*”

The Church Fathers give us a powerful answer:

⌘ **Origen (3rd century):**

“Christ chose Judas, not that he should betray Him, but that he should be saved. The choice was real, but Judas' will was free.”

This is an essential apologetic truth: **God respects human freedom**. He does not override our choices, even when they are evil. Yet, in His Providence, **He can bring salvation even out of betrayal**. The Cross is the greatest proof of that.



**St. Leo the Great:**

“That Judas betrayed Christ was his own doing; that Christ was delivered up was God's design for our redemption.”

God's omnipotence does not mean coercion. It means He can **weave evil into His saving plan**—not by willing evil, but by **permitting it for a greater good**.

## Spiritual Application: Do I Betray Jesus Today?

We may be tempted to look down on Judas. But how often do **we exchange Christ for lesser things**?

- For **30 minutes of pleasure**, we turn from grace.
- For **30 words of gossip**, we wound His Body, the Church.
- For **30 moments of pride**, we deny His Lordship.

Spy Wednesday invites us to **examine our own betrayals**—not in despair, but in the **light of Divine Mercy**. Jesus knew Judas would betray Him, and still **washed his feet**. He knew Peter would deny Him, and still **prayed for his faith**.

Let us not be like Judas who **fled from Mercy**, but like Peter who **wept and returned**.



**Prayer: Lord Jesus, you were betrayed by one you loved. Help me to see how I too have betrayed you by my sins. But let me not fall into despair.**

*Grant me the grace of true repentance, like Peter, and the courage to return to you always. Amen.*