

Lectionary Texts for March 27, 2024 • *Wednesday of Holy Week* - Year B
Isaiah 50:4-9a • Psalm 70 • Hebrews 12:1-3 • John 13:21-32



John 13:21-32

The Last Supper, c. 1501-c. 1505, by Tilman Riemenschneider, German, c. 1460 -1531

Altarpiece panel carved in limewood

St. James Lutheran Church, Rothenburg ob der Tauber, Germany

The central panel of the *Altar of the Holy Blood* (See page 4.) is an intricately carved three-dimensional depiction of *The Last Supper*. An unusual aspect of the work is that Judas, rather than Jesus, is the central figure. He appears to be approaching Jesus, while the latter is backing away from him with a scornful look on his face.

Judas is carved from a separate piece of wood and reportedly, in times past, was removed on Good Friday, the day Judas betrayed Jesus. A local minister has said that this feature can be interpreted in different ways, but one is that Christians should not vilify Judas in particular; it was the sin of all of us that made Jesus's death and suffering necessary.

Little is known about Tilman Riemenschneider's early life, but around 1473 he began learning the trade of sculpting and woodcarving. At that time, the statutes of the sculptors' guild

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required that an apprentice travel to many different workshops to gain experience. In 1483 he settled in Würzburg and joined the Saint Luke's Guild of painters, sculptors, and glass workers. Two years later he married the widow of a master goldsmith who brought him property. He also became a citizen of Würzburg, which allowed him to attain the status of master craftsman and open a workshop.

By 1500 he had developed an outstanding reputation as an artist and had become a wealthy Würzburg citizen, owning a number of houses and vineyards. His flourishing workshop provided work for as many as 40 apprentices doing woodcarving, sculpting, and painting.

— *Art curated and narrative provided by Norman Mahan
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Isaiah 50:4-9a

The Lord God has given me the tongue of a teacher, that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word. Morning by morning he wakens — wakens my ear to listen as those who are taught. The Lord God has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, I did not turn backward. I gave my back to those who struck me, and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I did not hide my face from insult and spitting.

The Lord God helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame; he who vindicates me is near.

Who will contend with me?

Let us stand up together.

Who are my adversaries?

Let them confront me.

It is the Lord God who helps me; who will declare me guilty? All of them will wear out like a garment; the moth will eat them up

Psalms 70

Be pleased, O God, to deliver me. O Lord, make haste to help me!

Let those be put to shame and confusion who seek my life. Let those be turned back and brought to dishonor who desire to hurt me.

Let those who say, "Aha, Aha!" turn back because of their shame.

Let all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you. Let those who love your salvation say evermore, "God is great!"

But I am poor and needy; hasten to me, O God! You are my help and my deliverer; O Lord, do not delay!

Hebrews 12:1-3

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such hostility against himself from sinners, so that you may not grow weary or lose heart.

John 13:21-32

After saying this Jesus was troubled in spirit, and declared, “Very truly, I tell you, one of you will betray me.”

The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he was speaking. One of his disciples — the one whom Jesus loved — was reclining next to him; Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking.

So while reclining next to Jesus, he asked him, “Lord, who is it?”

Jesus answered, “It is the one to whom I give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish.”

So when he had dipped the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas son of Simon Iscariot. After he received the piece of bread, Satan entered into him.

Jesus said to him, “Do quickly what you are going to do.”

Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him. Some thought that, because Judas had the common purse, Jesus was telling him, “Buy what we need for the festival”; or, that he should give something to the poor.

So, after receiving the piece of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night.

When he had gone out, Jesus said, “Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once.



Altar of the Holy Blood by Tilman Riemenschneider, St. James Lutheran Church, Rothenburg ob der Tauber, Germany. His carving of *The Last Supper* is in the center with the *Entrance into Jerusalem* on the left and the *Agony in the Garden* on the right. In this year's Lectionary readings, the left panel accompanied the lessons for Palm/Passion Sunday.