

ATTACHMENTS AND ADDICTIONS.

ENSLAVE US,

MAKE US MORALLY AND PSYCHOLOGICALLY BLIND AND DEAF AND FINALLY RUIN OUR

Intent of these jottings:

- ✓ *To be aware the power our attachments to earthly things have to drive us away from God.*
- ✓ *To be realized that such attachments if unchecked become soft of unburnable addictions.*
- ✓ *To realize that all of us are weak and liable to fall prey of our passions and evil inclinations*
- ✓ *To keep watchful and humble, lest we too like Judas, lose the path and turn traitors to Our Lord.*

Target Audience

All audiences.

Specially the young who are in danger of falling prey to all sorts of addictions: drugs, drinks, pornography, etc.

Introductory thoughts:

We mean by “attachments” the inclinations and attractions we experience towards persons and things that though not sinful or bad in themselves, if unchecked and uncontrolled, may rob us of our freedom, lead us to do wrong actions and finally even destroy us; for instance, an uncontrolled attraction to drinks, drugs, sex, money, power, self-exaltation, etc...Those uncontrolled attractions, in the long run, may turn into unbreakable addictions.

If, we do not want to fall into personal, moral and spiritual failures, and bankruptcy we must foresee before time, the potential danger of those strong human inclinations and attachments and control them on time.

To exemplify the havoc that attachments can cause in our life, we study in these notes the sad story of Judas - an apostle turned into a traitor. It was his unchecked attachment to money that brought his ruin.

While studying the tragic personal, spiritual and moral wreckage of Judas, we shall reflect also on how our personal attachments may ruin our lives.

All of us are potential Judases unless we keep our inclinations and attachments under control before they become unbreakable chains and addictions.

STUDY REFLECTION OF JUDAS' FALL (Mt. 26/3-6; 47-50)

FIRST PART

Attachments Ruined Judas. They may also Ruin Us

Antecedents of Judas:

- He was not a born sinner and traitor
- He must have been a good man, otherwise Christ would have not chosen him..
- Christ saw in him a good man with good qualities and a good will.
- Jesus loved him.
- Judas left all he had to follow Jesus.
- Judas was a disciple like the rest. No one signalized him as a black sheep.
- Judas was not a stumbling block to anyone.
- Christ trusted him to the point of giving him the keeping of the common purse.
- When Christ said “One of you is to betray me”, no one suspected him.

Our antecedents

- We are not born criminals, thieves, apostates and vicious people.
- We have many good qualities and virtues.
- Because of them people appreciate us
- We led respectable lives.
- We held responsible jobs.
- We have been pious and charitable.
- Neighbors, colleagues and friends thought highly of us
- Our bosses and Superiors have been pleased with us. .
- We have sincere desires of being faithful to God leading respectable and fruitful lives.
- We pray and we have been faithful to our duties, to our families and to our neighbors. .
- We intend being faithful to God, to our beliefs and to our commitments.

IN SPITE OF HIS GOOD ANTECEDENTS, HIS UNCHECKED ATTACHMENTS LED JUDAS TO HIS FALL!

- Judas' attachment was love for money”.
- At the start when Jesus called him, Judas performed his duty well.
- He must have been concerned with the money, not for his own profit, but for the good of the group.
- Later on slowly, his heart got more and more attached to money.
- Later one he was more concerned with the money, than with the service of his Master. .
- His attachment to money got hold of him. .

- Did he realize that his attachment to money now possessed him? Did he do something about it?
- Not likely. He let it grow.
- Progressively, it went from bad to worse.
- At the end, his attachment destroyed him.

IN SPITE OF OUR GOOD ANTECEDENTS, OUR UNCHECKED ATTACHMENTS MAY LEAD US TO OUR FALL!

Attachments such as,

- Love to a person or persons, to a man or to a woman, family members, etc.
- Pride, self-love, lust, sloth, jealousy, greed, vanity, etc.
- Pleasures, food, drink, drugs, lust, etc..
- Love for comforts, one's health, freedom, etc.
- Attachment to: position, education, one's own reputation, job, work, etc.
- Attachment to possessions, wealth, etc.

Affect us all. Even the best and most devoted people are not exempted: for instance:

- A faithful married man, in the office grows fond of a woman secretary.
 - ✓ Without realizing it, his fondness towards her grows into an attachment.
 - ✓ Finally, it turns into lust.
 - ✓ If not fought on time, it may ruin his life and marriage.
- A person is appointed principal of a school or college, or a manager of a big work or enterprise.
 - ✓ First, he does his work in all honesty for the love of God, of his family or neighbor.
 - ✓ Then, he grows more and more attached to money, power and authority..
 - ✓ Finally, he does his work only for the love of self, not for the love of God or others.
 - ✓ If not fought on time, this attachment may ruin him, his work and his life.
- Attachments to persons, things and to ourselves may grow in anybody's heart. We have to be vigilant....
- From time to time, we have to examine ourselves and check on our lurking attachments.
- No sooner we discover an attachment, we have to act promptly and control it at any cost.
- If we allow it grow, it will sooner or later destroy our moral and spiritual stamina and ruin our life.

Reflect and pray:

Do I have any uncontrolled attachments?

- Am I unduly attached to any person or persons?
- Am I attached to material things? Job? Work? Money? Comfort? Luxuries? Pleasures?
- Am I attached to myself? To my will?, My opinion? My reputation?

SECOND PART

Harmful Effects of Attachments

Unchecked Attachments Make Us Hypocrites

- Anyone in the grip of attachments has to hide them from others, his superiors, family members, friends, even to himself
- To appease our consciences we have to rationalize our misbehavior.
- Next, we have to offer plausible reasons to others to explain to them what we do and why we do it.
- Thus, we have to dissimulate, pretend and find false excuses.
- In a word: we must act like hypocrites.
- Judas pretended to be a friend, “Is it I, Lord?” .

Question yourself: In the way you behave and live your life:

- Are you rationalizing your actions and acting in a hypocritical way?
- Are you honest to yourself and transparent to others?
- To yourself be true!

Unchecked Attachments Shut Our Minds and Hearts

They make us Spiritually, Morally and Psychologically”“Deaf”

Christ spoke several times to Judas, but his mind and heart were closed

(Jo. 6, 71-72) “Have I not chosen the twelve of you? And one of you is a devil”. He was speaking of Judas, Son of Simon the Iscariot who was one of the twelve, who was to betray him”.

(Jo. 13, 18) After the washing of the feet In the Last Supper. “I am not thinking of all of you when I say this. I know who are the men I have chosen are”.

(Jo. 13, 11) “And you are clean now; only not all of you. He knew who his betrayer was; that is why he said: you are not all clean”.

(Jo. 13, 21) “Believe me, he said, believe me, one of you is to betray me”.

Question yourself:

- In the past, have you ever felt any stirrings in your conscience?
- Did you pay heed to them? Check and remember. Which and about what?
- Has ever a good friend call your attention to something not commendable in your life?
- Did you reflect on what he said to you or gave him a deaf ear?

Unchecked Attachments Make Us Blind.

- First, we do not like or do not want to see things as they really are
- Then, we try to hide things from ourselves and from others.
- Finally, with specious reasons we justify ourselves...

- ✓ "After all it is not so bad...
- ✓ I have enough reasons....
- ✓ Others do the same..." etc.
- At the end we convince ourselves! We are right! Others are wrong.
- In a word, we blind ourselves.
 - **Whenever you are wrong, do you try to justify yourself?**
 - **Be Aware, you may be turning blind.**
 - **To yourself be true!**

Unchecked Attachments, finally, Ruin Us

- Once we have fallen pray to unconroled attachments and turned blind we hasten to our ruin.
- Once blinded, we do not need any longer deceive others and ourselves.
- Since we think that we are right; why to put on masks any more, or hide our true motives?
- Thus , Judas finally threw away his mask and openly betrayed Jesus:
- Unambiguously, he told the Pharisees: "How much will you give me if I hand him over to you?"
- Finally, he went into the Garden and in the presence of the disciples, his former companions and the by-standers, he handed Jesus over to his enemies.
- Now he needs not hide any longer. He shows his true self.
- At the end, morally and spiritually deaf and blind, like Judas, those who have fallen pray to their uncontrolled attachments, show their true colors!
- They have nothing to hide! Their ruin is complete!!

Let us pray that by getting free, on time, from our attachments and addictions we may escape a tragic end, like many other 'Judases' have met down the centuries

INTROSPECTION – EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE;

Let us examine ourselves to see which are – if any - our unchecked attachments and pray that hat we may have the strength to fight them out!

ATTACHEMENS TO THINGS

Material things: Money and wealth. ...wealth and possessions ... properties, Etc.

Formal things...place, work, job, hobbies, position, authority, prestige, influence, etc

ATTACHEMETNS TO PERSONS..

Men, women, friends, colleagues, family members, relations, acquaintances etc.

ATTACHMENTS TO SELF....

Comfort, health, honors, position, name, sloth, pride, touchiness, my plans, my ideas, laziness, sensuality, sexual pleasures, gluttony, etc.

APPENDIX: Reflections on the Sad End of Judas.

The Loss of Judas:

- Judas left the cenacle a traitor. not yet a reprobate
- However, that unchecked attachment - that had turned him deaf and blind to God's love and inspiration - rendered him morally incapable of **true sorrow and repentance.**
- To repent, a person requires the moral and spiritual stamina to accept his fault and the humility to ask for pardon.
- A person like Judas, so weakened by his attachment, was not able to summon that strength. Nothing of that was left to him alter his moral wreckage and spiritual bankruptcy.
- Had he run to Calvary and fallen on his knees at the feet of his Master and asked for pardon, Jesus would have forgiven him as he forgave Peter.
- The blind, self conceited and distrustful Judas ran of his own accord to perdition

Other Judases' Loss

- Can we become other Judases? Yes if we allow ourselves be the victims of our uncontrolled **attachments and addictions.**
- Once we let our passions grow unrestrained, we place ourselves in a condition that makes our conversion, a come-back **practically impossible.**
- Once we turned spiritually and morally blind, deaf and self- righteous, a personal conversion is well-nigh impossible. This is precisely the sin against the Holy Spirit, Jesus warns us about in the Gospel.
- If we, have not gone so far in the way of Judas, it is due either to the fact that we have not been sucked in by such strong attachments and addictions , or that God's grace has got us out of them.
- Let us **be vigilant.** Let us remember that attachments are like bonds and chains that keep us ferreted on the ground preventing us from flying to God.