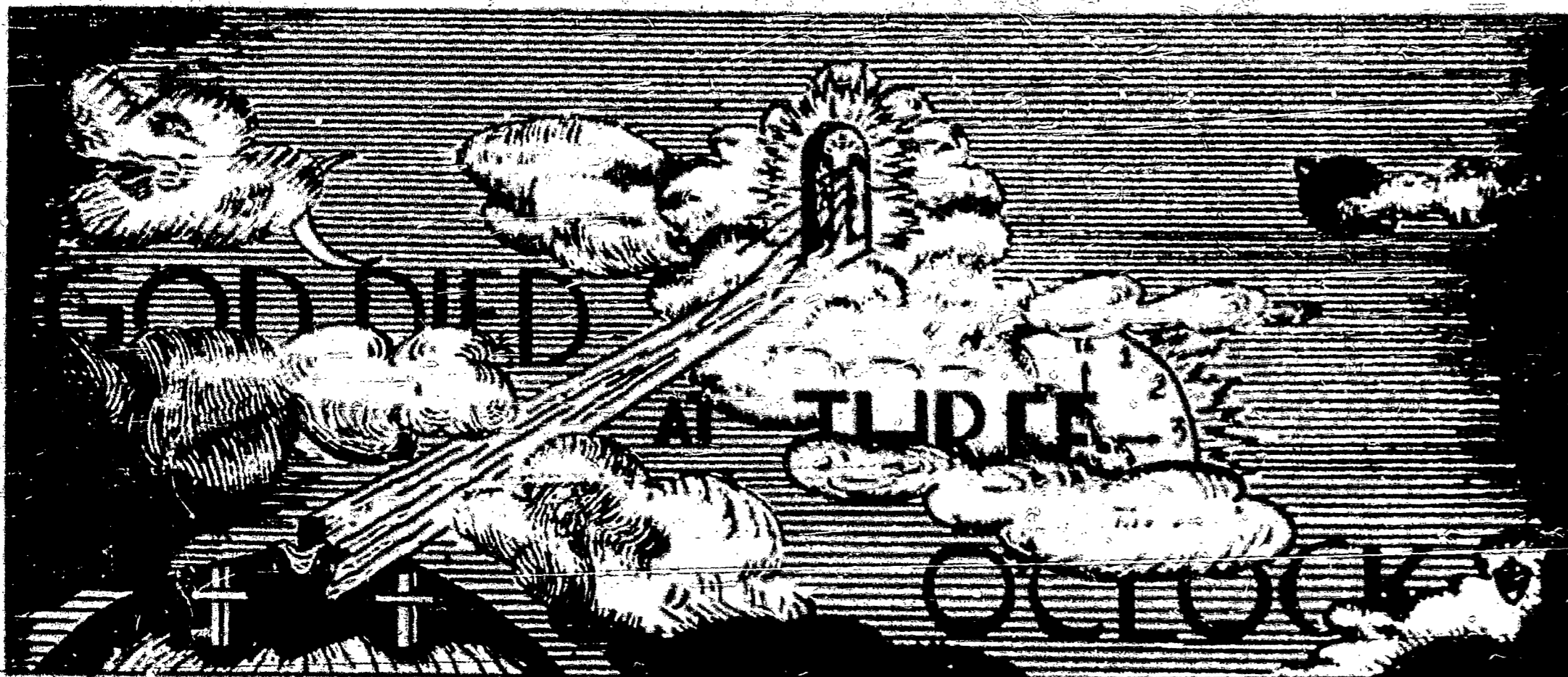


The Courier Journal

Youth Section



By the Reverend Gerald T. Brennan
I. The Traitor

"One of you shall betray Me!" These words of Jesus Christ cut like a sword into the hearts of the twelve Apostles.

"One of you . . . You . . . YOU!"

One of the Apostles is a traitor! These are terrible words. They are hard to believe.

The Apostles know that Jesus has enemies. There are men who hate Christ. These enemies would betray Him. Even destroy Him. But one of the Apostles? Never!

For three long years the Apostles have been Christ's best friends. They have lived with Him, eaten with Him, slept with Him. During all this time, these twelve men have been loyal and faithful. They have seen Christ give sight to the blind. They have seen Him cure the sick and raise the dead to life. Jesus is God! This the Apostles know and believe.

But now something is wrong. This Thursday night things are taking a strange and sudden turn. Gathered in an Upper Room in Jerusalem, Christ and His Apostles are celebrating the great Jewish Feast of the Passover. The supper — it is Christ's Last Supper but the Apostles do not know this — has gone quite well up to now. The Apostles enjoy being there in the Upper Room. Alone with the Master, they feel safe and secure.

In a moment this feeling of safety is broken by the Master Himself. His strong eyes flash, and from His lips the awful word "traitor" falls like a thunderbolt.

"One of you shall betray Me! Who is the Traitor?"

The Apostles are stunned and shocked. They stare at one another and speak in whispers. Which of them can it be? Who is the traitor? Each Apostle wonders whether he may be guilty.

"Is it I, Lord?" asks Matthew and he trembles as he speaks.

Before Jesus can answer, the others shout the same question. "Is it I, Lord? Is it I?"

The Apostles are excited and Jesus waits for them to be quiet before answering. His answer is a disappointment. Jesus does not name the traitor, nor does He call him by name. He tells only that one of the twelve will betray Him.

This is not enough. It is not enough for the leader of the Apostles, Peter. He is angry and seeks to know the traitor. The Upper Room is filled with the noise of excited voices, but Peter signals John to ask Jesus to name the traitor.

John, who is sitting next to Christ, is also eager to know. Turning, he whispers quietly into the Master's ear.

"Lord, who is it?"

John waits for Jesus to speak the name of the unfaithful Apostle, but the Master does not tell it. Even though He is betrayed, Christ is loyal to the traitor. The name of the faithless Apostle is Christ's secret, but He can trust John whom He loves the

best.

"Lord, who is it?" John urges again.

"He is — to whom I shall give bread."

John alone hears and he understands that the traitor's name must be kept a secret.

As He speaks, Jesus takes a piece of bread and hands it to Judas. Judas Iscariot. Judas is the traitor.

Peter sees Christ pass the bread to Judas but he does not know what it means. Peter wants only a name, but no name is spoken.

A red blush on John's cheek tells of the anger in his soul. He is tempted to accuse Judas openly. Instead, the Apostle, whom Jesus loves the most, stares silently at the Apostle whose name is now "Traitor."

But Judas is calm. He is a good pretender, a fine actor.

"Is it I, Master?" he asks as he takes the bread and begins to eat.

Jesus nods his head and answers. "Thou hast said it. What you are going to do, do quickly!"

This answer surprises Judas. It startles him. He is certain now that Jesus knows everything. But Judas has made his evil bargain with Christ's enemies. Already Judas has agreed to betray Jesus to them for thirty pieces of silver. He has told no one what he has done. He has kept everything to himself. Yet, Jesus knows. Jesus knows the treason of Judas, but He is loyal to the traitor.

If only Judas would confess his sin and ask Christ's forgiveness! It is not too late if Judas were only sorry. But the heart of the traitor is hardened. He hangs his head in stubborn silence.

"What you are going to do, do quickly!"

These words of Christ stir the traitor to action. Suddenly he rises, and hurrying from the room, goes out into the night.

II. The Garden

The traitor is gone. . . . He will never return to the company of the Apostles. For Judas, the Last Supper must be always an hour of shame.

Sadly Jesus looks on the empty place at the table — the place of Judas. Then He turns His eyes to the other Apostles. He sees only eleven. . . . Judas is gone but Jesus still has Peter and Peter's brother, Andrew. And James and John, also brothers. Still with Christ are Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas and Simon. Also two more brothers, Jude and the other James.

Christ smiles at these friends — His Apostles. These are the men who must build the Church. Who must carry His story to the ends of the earth. These are the men — poor and frightened men — who must suffer in His Name.

They listen as the Master begins to speak to them. First He gives them a shock. Soon, He says, He will leave them, but He

will come back. No, the Apostles can not go with Him. He is going to His Father in Heaven. And He must go alone.

Next Christ warns them of the future. At His Apostles, they will have to suffer many times. But He promises that their sorrows shall be turned into joy — great joy.

The Dangerous Hour

The Apostles are disturbed and they grow more fearful when Christ tells them that an hour of great danger is come.

The Apostles need encouragement and Christ gives it to them. They should not worry too much. He says, about the troubles which

row path which brings them to the Brook of Cedron. Crossing the bridge, they come to a grove or garden of olive trees. A stone wall encloses the garden. This is the Garden of Olives.

Jesus stops at the entrance. He waits for the Apostles to gather around Him before He speaks.

"Sit here while I go inside to pray!"

The Apostles are tired. They have walked for almost half an hour, and they are anxious to rest. Without saying a word, the men obey Christ and sit on the ground.

Jesus walks through the gate



"What you are going to do, do quickly."

the world will bring to them.

"Have hope," He urges, "I have overcome the world!"

To the Apostles, the Master's words are full of mystery. Their minds are weary and mixed up from trying to understand.

At last, Jesus rises. Looking towards heaven, He raises His arms.

"Oh, Father," He speaks, "I have finished the work that You gave Me to do."

He prays for Himself. He prays for the Apostles. He prays for the Church.

The Supper is over. It is almost midnight. It is time to go. But where do they go?

Jesus leads the way down the narrow steps and the Apostles follow. But where are they going at this hour of the night? Silently they follow the Master.

Jerusalem is asleep — but not Jesus and His eleven Apostles! The little group hurries through the streets of the city and few words are spoken. They pass through the eastern gate and walk along the rough and nar-

rowing into the Garden. He turns and motions to Peter, James and John to follow Him.

The three Apostles ask no questions. Tonight they want to be close to Jesus. They jump to their feet, walk into the garden, and keep a short distance behind the Master.

Suddenly, Jesus turns and faces the three men. The soft moon lights His face. He seems very serious and very sad.

"My soul is full of sorrow. Stay here and watch with Me!" He asks them.

The Apostles nod their heads. The sadness of Christ worries them. They wish to talk to Him but the words do not come.

Jesus has no need of words from the Apostles. They cannot help Him. Only He knows the terrible thing which is about to happen and He must face it alone.

Jesus is Dead

Turning away from the weary Apostles, Jesus walks a little further into the Garden

in prayer. As He prays He is seized by a great sorrow. Some unseen power seems to crush Him down. He falls forward on His face. Flat to the ground.

His body breaks into a hot sweat. His cheeks are flushed with fever. So awful is the sorrow that even drops of blood form on His brow and trickle down His face.

Why is the strong Christ so shaken. Is He afraid of the for sinners as His preacher? Does some vision of the world's sin loom before Him to darken His pure soul? What brings this agony to Christ?

Jesus is fighting against a great temptation. This is what crushes Him with grief. Here in this corner of the Garden of Olives Jesus sees in vision all those people who will never love Him — even though He gives His life for them. He sees all those sinners who will never care about one drop of His blood. Even though He will offer to forgive them many sinners will turn their backs on Him and walk away. This picture of shameful ingratitude is the thing which is breaking the heart of the good Christ.

He has come into the world to die for sinners but many sinners He sees will not care very much. Jesus is tempted to fall silently from the Garden and leave this world of cold hearts to take care of itself.

But He struggles against this temptation. He prays to His Father to take away this frightening thought, but only if it is His Father's will.

He staggers to His feet and comes to the three Apostles. They are asleep. Peter awakes to hear the Master ask of him:

"Can you not watch one hour with Me?"

Now James and John are also awake. They see Christ's third face marked with the bloody lines of suffering. They wonder.

"Pray that you do not enter into temptation," He says to them as He turns and walks slowly back to His own place of prayer.

Soon the Apostles drop into sleep again. Here in the moonlit Garden only Jesus is awake, and suffering, and praying.

"Father . . . not My will, but Yours will be done. . . ."

A second time Jesus would like to find the Apostles asleep and they are too ashamed to speak to Him. But their weariness is stronger than their shame. They do not hear Christ's final prayer. They do not watch as Jesus overcomes the terrible temptation to hate sinners who will never love Him.

As the Apostles sleep Jesus offers His life for all sinners, also those who will never thank Him.

Once more Peter, James and John awake to find Christ standing before them. He is strong and calm again. But the Apostles hear noises on the road leading to the Garden. And they see lights as close that they cast shadows over the olive trees.

Fearful they turn to Jesus and their eyes are full of questions. "Who comes at this hour to the Garden?" they ask.

"He that will betray Me is here!" answers Jesus and He watches as the lights bringing the traitor come closer to the Garden.

(Continued next week)

2 Summer Schools Mapped at St. Bon's

Olean, N. Y. — Two Summer School sessions are being contemplated at Saint Bonaventure College this year. . . .

It is planned to have the Summer School begin on July 27, and the second session on July 31. . . .

consideration will be given of a two-week period, six days a week. . . .