

# Thoughts on the Journey...

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## A Story of Betrayal:

They were two typical little girls: a four year old and a six year old. These sisters idolized one another and had a strong bond of friendship, even at their young age. They loved their parents and, like most children, they brought joy to

everyone around them. They mastered giggling like a couple of hyenas and, by all accounts, were happy and well adjusted.

Innocent and oblivious of most adult related things going on around them, they played and did what typical children do. These little girls were completely unaware of the groundswell of danger that would threaten the happiness of their world.

One day, their mother collected their things, and along with the two girls, loaded them in the car. Without an explanation, this mother left their father, the house they knew as 'home', and abruptly moved them into another man's house. The man was not a stranger to their mother because she had been having an affair with him for the past year. However, these little girls had no idea who he was or why they were no longer living with their daddy. There are two sides to every story, but the only innocent people in this scenario were these children.

Immediately, the aftermath of this betrayal took hold like a bad virus that permeated every aspect their life as a family. Two otherwise happy children were thrown into a very dark place where confusion, hurt, and anger dissolved their trust, happiness, and security.

Betrayal is a destructive force that rips at the heart of the innocent. Consenting adults with little regard for the rippling damage of their selfish actions made a mockery of their wedding covenant and the parental responsibility that God entrusted to them..

Before long, these young innocent children, who could not verbalize the sting of their pain, began to react with anger and resentment towards those around them, clearly demonstrating the residual damage of their parents' sinful choices. *Hurt people, hurt people* and the cyclical nature of betrayal marches on.

## Another Story of Betrayal:

The Gospel of Matthew tells the story of the Passion of our Lord and begins with Jesus and his disciples entering into Jerusalem. Large crowds gathered spreading their cloaks on the ground and waving palms yelling, "hosanna to the Son of David... hosanna in the highest." It didn't take long before the tide turned and nearly every one around Jesus, friends and enemies alike, would betray him in one way or another.

As Jesus and his apostles were at the table celebrating the Passover, Jesus said to them,

**"Amen, I say to you, one of you will betray me." Deeply distressed at this, they began to say to him one after another, "Surely it is not I, Lord?"**

Most of us on any given day don't plot and conive ways to betray God or his people. As part of the effects of original sin, we are flawed and fall prey to temptation that lurks nearly everywhere we turn. Many times, evil's bait is shiny and attractive and we pounce on it hook, line, and sinker. We want immediate gratification and satisfaction regardless of the cost. There isn't one of us living today who hasn't been hurt by sin or who hasn't hurt others through our own sinfulness. Like the crowds who followed Jesus, waving their palm branches in praise of him, then cried, "Crucify Him", we, too, betray our Lord in the many ways we move away from him. In his Palm Sunday homily, St. Andrew of Crete, one of the early Church Fathers, gives us sound advice for moving closer to our Lord:

*"In his humility, Christ entered the dark regions of our fallen world and he is glad that he became so humble for our sake, glad that he came and lived among us and shared in our nature in order to raise us up again to himself...So let us spread before his feet, not garments or soulless olive branches, which delight the eye for a few hours and then wither, but ourselves, clothed in his grace, or rather, clothed completely in him. We who have been baptized into Christ must ourselves be the garments that we spread before him...Let our souls take the place of the welcoming branches as we join today in the children's holy song: Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Blessed is the king of Israel."*