Judas went to one of the chief priests and asked: “What are you willing to give me if I hand Jesus over to you?” (Mt 26:15) Sadly, Judas betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. Judas was also prone to dipping into the common purse and had already betrayed his position of trust on numerous occasions.

In the Gospel of John, six days before the Passover, we hear of his embezzlement. Annoyed at the lavish anointing of Jesus’ feet with genuine aromatic nard, Judas the Iscariot said, “‘Why was this oil not sold for three hundred days’ wages and given to the poor?’ He said this not because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief and held the money bag and used to steal the contributions” (John 12:5-6).

The sin of Judas is highlighted in today’s Gospel. It is all too easy to look down upon him and thank heaven like the Pharisee, “O God, I thank you that I am not like the rest of humanity—greedy, dishonest, adulterous” (Luke 18:11). Rather than cast stones at others, we should examine our own lives instead.

As a child growing up 50 years ago, I recall that candy bars only cost a dime. One day the man who picked up change from the vending machines had an accident and spilled coins out of the collection box. He gave one boy an apron and asked him to hold it while he scooped the scattered change into the apron. For his help, the man gave the young helper a candy bar. I noticed the man had missed one dime and pointed it out to him. The man thanked me. An older child chided me for not keeping my mouth shut so I could steal the dime.

The 7th commandment says, “You shall not steal” (Ex 20:15, Lv 19:11). It makes no differentiation between a dime and a dollar, between $10 or $10,000. When we start out small and get away with it, we can be encouraged to take a little bit more the next time and the next time. Judas stole money that was intended for the poor. We may look to themes in Catholic Social teaching for other examples of stealing.

In 1891, Pope Leo XIII issued the Encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, on the rights and duties of capital and labor. An employer has a responsibility to treat workers fairly, to provide a safe environment in which to work, to give them ample time off and to pay a fair wage. Pope Leo advocated for the formation of trade unions and collective bargaining in order to ensure fair treatment for workers. One cannot help but think of Moses going to Pharaoh and asking for a day of rest so that the Hebrew people could worship God on the Sabbath.

Each generation is called to be good stewards of the resources entrusted to them. In *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis highlights our “throwaway culture” (22). Various scientific studies have pointed out that the plastic that we so casually throw away is polluting the sea and endangering the wildlife of land, sea and air. And back to my example of the 10 cent candy bar, how much trash do we see when the snow melts and the plastic bottles, bags, aluminum cans, cigarette butts and other trash are exposed? Is this not a betrayal of our stewardship of the resources entrusted to our care? Are we not stealing from future generations when we fail to take care of God’s creation?

Pope Francis also points out how the economy should work for the common good of all rather than being narrowly focused on profits. “The economy accepts every advance in technology with a view to profit, without concern for its potentially negative impact on human beings” (109). Beyond the narrow lens of profit, we must show “interest in more balanced levels of production, a better distribution of wealth, concern for the environment and the rights of future generations” (109).

When we see the faults of others, we should examine our own lives. At what price would I betray Jesus? How does my selfishness hurt others? Then standing off at a distance with heartfelt contrition, we should pray, “O God, be merciful to me a sinner.” (Luke 18:13).