

Saint Ignatius of Loyola, in his *Spiritual Exercises*, encourages us to not only read or listen to the Gospel stories ... but to put ourselves in these stories ... to see ourselves as one or the characters.

In today's Gospel from St. John, we hear Jesus say to his Apostles, "one of you will betray me." How does this affect me? Hearing this said when I place myself in the upper room?

And in St. John's Gospel, there are three others mentioned: Simon Peter, the beloved disciple, and Judas Iscariot.

Where are we in relation to those three?

Simon Peter, who in the Spirit proclaims: "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God;" in his next breath speaks from his wounded humanity, and receives the rebuke "Get behind me Satan!"

Does our faith touch our senses, so that we see the reality of God's glory ... but does it fail to penetrate into our minds and hearts – so that our plans fall short of God's plan?

The beloved disciple, reclining at Jesus' side ... so close to the Sacred Heart of Jesus that he could hear it, maybe even feel it's beating.

Where are we in our relationship with Jesus? Do we lag behind when he calls us to follow? Or are we three steps ahead of him going in our own direction? Or are we at his side ... thinking with the mind of Christ, our own heart beating in rhythm to his own Sacred Heart?

And Judas Iscariot, who could only see things with the eyes of the world. Are we complaining to Jesus that money is being wasted? Do we put ourselves above Christ, and seek other means of salvation through worldly ways? Do we hold fast to the Hope we received in Baptism, or have we despaired of God's Love?

Three men ... three apostles ... all chosen by Christ himself ... all destined for glory as his apostles in the Kingdom. Three different men, with three different relationships to Jesus Christ himself ... and three very different personalities ... three different sets of strengths ... three different sets of weaknesses.

Which one do we see ourselves as when we reflect on this passage from St. John's Gospel? Or which parts of them do we identify with?

Let us pray that we may be strengthened in our Baptismal graces – the Supernatural Graces of Faith, Hope, and Love ... and as we move forward in Holy Week ... toward the Triduum ... toward the Cross ... let us receive and act, not in our own power ... but in the power of Christ, the power of God, the power of the Cross, the power found only at the side of Jesus Christ ... in the Sacred Heart of Jesus ...

Let us place ourselves firmly at his side, and pray for the supernatural strength to never leave his side ... today ... tomorrow ... to the Cross ... to the Tomb ... to the end. Sacred Heart of Jesus ... have mercy on us.