



Essential Evangelization

Close Encounters

This week we remember and meditate on the Passion and death of Jesus. Have you ever wondered what it would have been like to have really been there? To experience it all as an eyewitness? Here in order of appearance of the Gospel of Luke are the characters who had a close encounter with the Son of God:

First Peter, at the last supper denied he would ever deny Christ, but it happened only hours later just as Jesus predicted – and 3 times! How many times have we promised God we would be faithful, but in our weakness fell short on our promise?

Then Judas, one of the elite, the chosen twelve, who sold Jesus out for just 30 pieces of silver. How many times have we betrayed Christ and sinned when a short term temptation got the better of us?

Pilate, who actually said “I find this man not guilty” – and 3 times! He even did better than Peter! But when the anger of the crowd got too great, he caved and “washed his hands.” How many times have we went with the crowd and chose the easy road of peer pressure rather than taking a strong stand for our faith?

Barabbas, the guy who got a free out of jail ticket. But did he come back to thank Jesus? The Gospel does not tell us that. Have we ever experienced the saving, freeing forgiveness of Jesus but soon drifted away from the honeymoon of thankfulness of God’s unconditional love in our lives?

Simon of Cyrene, who actually got the honor to walk with Jesus for a time, carrying the cross. But was he there when Jesus was nailed and lifted up? The Gospel does not tell us that. How many times have we walked with Christ, but eventually fell back into our old ways and relied on our own strength instead of trusting in Jesus when things really got tough?

And finally the two thieves: one doubter and skeptic, and another very faith-filled, even in the face of extreme personal pain and suffering. Which one are we?

We were there.

*This is one of a series of articles on
Evangelization from the
Evangelization Committee*