

WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?

Our answer to Jesus's question is formulated in many ways. This time of prayer is geared to help us have time to explore the loving, healing Heart of Jesus and better understand how He wants to be in our lives. One way can be to look at how men and women in the Scriptures related to Jesus; some saddened Him; others delighted him. How does my life resemble their lives?

SOME PEOPLE WHO SADDENED JESUS:

- The rich young man who won't let go: Mark 10:17-27
- The prodigal son's elder brother: Luke 15: 16-19
- Workers who complained of generosity to others: Matthew 20: 1-16
- Irreverent people and exploiters of others: John 2: 14-16
- Legalists who make an absolute out of law: Matthew 12: 1-8; John 5
- The fool who tried to depend on himself: Luke 12:13-21

SOME PEOPLE WHO DELIGHTED JESUS:

- Mary: Luke 1:26-56; John 19: 25-27
- John the Baptist: John 1: 19-34; Mark 1: 1-8; Matthew 11: 7-11
- Martha & Mary: Luke 10: 38-42
- The Canaanite woman: Mark 7: 24-30
- Zacheus: Luke 19: 1-10
- Woman at the well: John: 4: 4-30
- Friends of the paralytic: Mark 2: 1-12
- The widow in the temple: Luke 21: 1-4
- The boy who offered to share his food: John 6: 1-15
- Little children: Mark 10: 13-16
- The cured leper who said thanks: Luke 17:11-19
- Those who change their No to a Yes: Matthew 21: 28-32
- Andrew & Philip & Nathaniel: John 1: 35-51
- Peter: Matthew 16: 13-19; Matthew 26: 69-75; John 21: 15-19
- The woman with the costly perfume: Mark 14: 3-9
- The Good Thief: Luke 23: 32-43
- The centurion who asked for help for his servant: Luke 7: 1-10

Throughout the Gospels, Jesus praises and helps people of faith and trust. His recurring complaint about His followers is that they are "of little faith." Faith is not a head trip but a heart trip and a hand clasp or embrace. It is not belief without proof, but it is trust without reservation. It is a collaborative venture with our God; it is letting Jesus Christ come into our lives and walk with us. Who is Jesus Christ to me? Who do I need Him to be? Do I invite Him into my life?

The Holy Scriptures confront me: THIS IS WHAT JESUS CHRIST TAUGHT; THIS IS HOW JESUS CHRIST LIVED!

The Holy Scriptures challenge me: LIVE YOUR LIFE ACCORDING TO THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS CHRIST!

The Holy Scriptures Comfort me better than anything else when I realize how my life is confronted by Jesus's teachings and when I meet the challenge to live my life in the way He invites me to.

John The Baptist is a good example (Mark 1: 1-8; Matthew 11: 7-11; John 1: 19-34): John does not have an identity crisis when he meets Jesus as an adult; John knows that he is not the savior, he does not try to play God; John is content to be a herald, to be one who points to Jesus! John the Baptist is willing to grow in his knowledge and understanding of Jesus; nowhere in the Gospels is Jesus pleased with people who are closed to His healing and changing presence.

I pray that I may find ways to point to Jesus by the kind of life I live:

I pray that I may avoid playing God in my life and in the lives of others:

- I play God when I try to remake others in my image and likeness;
- when I micro manage the lives of others and plan their destiny;
- when I demand from another a love and attention that amounts to adoration;
- when I smother others with my presence and totally absorb their existence;
- when I pretend to have the answers to everything;
- when I presume to probe the hearts of others and judge their motive;
- when I take to myself the business of revenge or retribution;
- when I refuse to admit my faults and limitations;
- when I think I never have to say "I'm sorry."
- when I think I never have to ask for help.
- when I

To answer Jesus's question we need a place of quiet, a place to empty myself of all that is shallow. We need to move, with the Lord, into the deep inner recesses of my being and dialog with my Lord:

Lord, help me to put aside the shallow self, the false self, the escapist, the chatterer, the hider behind actions. Give me a prayerful heart. Help me to be still and know that You are God. Let me be the good soil for the seed that You want to plant in my heart, in my life.

Who is Jesus Christ to Me?

Jesus: A Man in service of others.

Jn 2: 1-11; Mk 1:29-34; Lk 10:38-42

1. How do we serve others in ways other than through needs?
2. Where do we see people making the mistake of trying to win love from others by what they do for them?
3. What does it mean to choose to love someone?

Jesus: A Man with a sense of responsibility.

Jn 14: 1-4; Jn 15: 9-17; Mt 28: 16-20; Eph 5:1-20

1. Do we take a legalistic view of life; what are its effects on others and on ourselves?
2. How might we fall into the problem of self-righteousness?
3. Do we experience the security of being God's sons and daughters and Jesus' brothers and sisters?

Jesus: A Man of high expectations.

Mt 5: 38-48; Jn 4: 1-42 Lk 7: 36-50; Jn 8: 1-11

1. When we experienced too much stress to do things perfectly, what other values were being neglected?
2. How do we "turn the other cheek?"
3. How do we see Jesus more concerned about growth than perfection?

Jesus: A Man with ambition to succeed.

Lk 4: 14-30 Lk 10: 17-24; Jn 6:1-15 Lk 14: 25-33

1. How important is it to have clear goals in our lives? What are some goals that we especially admire?
2. Are we tempted to make the end justify the means?

3. How do we deal with failure? How did Jesus deal with it?

Jesus: A Man Who was sensitive and often misunderstood.

Jn 11: 1-44; Mt 21: 1-11; Jn 13: 1-17; Mk 14: 32-42

1. What are some good characteristics of people we know who are very sensitive? How would we like to imitate them?
2. What advice would we give to people who are overly sensitive and easily hurt?
3. How do I need to show more feeling?

Jesus: A Man with chosen goals and values.

Mt 7: 1-5; Mt 11: 25-30; Lk 14: 7-14; Lk 21: 1-4

1. What teaching of Jesus have I tried to build my life on? How have these helped me during the "storms" of my life?
2. How do we experience prayer as a time for reflection on our lives in the light of Jesus' teachings?
3. What are some ways of entering into dialogue with others to lead them to clearer goals and values?

Jesus: Our Lord Who intended life to be enjoyed.

Jn 21: 1-13; Mk 6: 30-44; Jn 6: 25-59; Mt 9: 14-17

1. How have I experienced Jesus making my plans, my life turn out even better than I expected?
2. Who are some persons we know who are especially light hearted and enjoying life? What makes them that way?
3. How have I found it to be true in my life that pain is not necessarily to be avoided? What good has come out of some of the pain I have endured?

The Questions Jesus Asks

In all four of the Gospels Jesus addresses questions to various people (at least 7 times in Matthew; 7 times in Mark; 14 times in Luke; 10 times in John – there are some places you can quibble with about being a question or not but these are obvious). Real questions expect real answers. Jesus' questions can provide us with good places to pray as we answer the Lord in our thoughts and words. They can provide excellent opportunities for us to enter into a personal conversation with Jesus. He is interested in us and wants us to share ourselves with Him.

Some that may be particularly helpful for us on retreat:

What are you looking for? (John 1:38)

Whom are you looking for (John 18:3)

If you love those who love you, what credit is that? (Luke 6:32)

Who do you say I AM? (Matthew 16: 13 ff)

Why are you afraid? (Matthew 8:26)

Where are the other nine? (Luke 17:11-19)

Do you love Me? (John 21:15-17)

All four of the Gospels also provide examples of questions addressed to the Lord or questions about the Lord. The daily Mass readings in booklets like *Magnificat* or *Living with Christ*, provide us easy access to the scriptures for every day of the year. You can also “google” Daily Mass Readings to get them on a smart phone or tablet. A free “app,” *Laudate*, not only has the daily readings but a lot of other daily prayers.

Anima Christi

Soul of Christ, sanctify me
Body of Christ, save me
Blood of Christ, inebriate me
Water from the Side of Christ,
wash me
Passion of Christ,
strengthen me
O Good Jesus, hear me
Within Your wounds, hide me
Permit me not
to be separated from You
From the wicked foe, defend me
At the hour of my death, call me
And bid me come to You
That with Your Saints
I may praise You
For ever and ever, Amen!

Opening Prayer of **The Spiritual Exercises:**
It provides us with ways to invite the Lord into our
lives especially into those places we most need Him!
