

With The Passion Narrative being so long, I'll keep the homily short and simple. Throughout His ministry, Jesus drew crowds. He was like a magnet – but the crowds weren't always fans. Jesus always drew as many opponents as disciples. Similarly, as we hear in today's Gospel, Jesus collects sinners to Himself. This truth is nowhere more evident than in His last 24 hours.

Consider the sins and sinners crowding around the Savior at this point at the beginning of Holy Week. We can make a good examination of conscience simply by contemplating this rogue's gallery and their sins. There is betrayal. Judas sells out Jesus for money. Have we betrayed others? Gossiped about friends with others? Undermined co-workers' projects or reputations? And, of course, there is adultery in action or thought.

There's Spiritual Sloth. Think of Peter, James and John, sleeping while Jesus needs their prayer. Are there cases when we haven't been there for friends in need because we couldn't bother? Or have

we neglected our spiritual duties of praise and worship of God because we simply forgot – that sounds like a legitimate excuse – or is it that we’ve become so spiritual lazy that such “forgetting” is the norm?

What about violence? Think of the High Priest’s guards, the Romans soldiers. The Passion Narrative would be R rated due to its violence. There’s blood, gore, swords, whips, punching and slapping and, of course, crucifixion. I may not have shed blood – but is anyone afraid of me? Dread meeting me? Are my words and voice sometimes violent? Have I imposed my will in sinful ways?

Let’s not forget cowardice. The Apostles run away in the Garden. And, of course, Peter denies even knowing Jesus. Do we deny knowing Jesus? Do we stand up for Him, His Church, the faith? Have I avoided confrontations I’m morally called to make? What role does peer pressure play in my decisions?

And there's always deceit to be found among sinners. The Father of Lies has his own disciples in the false witnesses lying to the Sanhedrin. I could go on, but I promised to keep it short. My point is that as Jesus prepares to face His Cross He is surrounded and afflicted by the Sin He battles – our sins. But He does not condemn any of us sinners. Instead, He will die for them – us! To free us from those very sins we loaded upon Him. That is the story of divine love and salvation we are going to celebrate this week.

Holy Thursday mass will be at 6:30, Good Friday Service will be at 6:30 (there are also stations of the cross at St. Monica at noon). The Easter Vigil will be at 8:00 on Saturday evening – and Easter Sunday masses will be at 9:00 and 11:00. There will not be a 5:00 Easter night mass at Sacred Heart. Please join in thanking Jesus for His rescue of us by participating and praying.