

The Lord's Supper (Matthew 26:20-30)

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Guidelines: Protect confidentiality and follow the leader's prompts.

Ignatian Meditation Process: Ignatius chose this Gospel reading for Week 3 of *The Spiritual Exercises*. Read the introduction and then “ask for the grace.” Then quietly read the passage by using your imagination to enter into the story, sensing and feeling what's going on. Don't analyze the passage or seek insights — *experience yourself as a character in the story*. After the second reading have a “colloquy” (short, personal conversation) with the Lord. You can use the prompts and questions at the bottom to guide your prayer time and journaling (and sharing with others).

Introduction: Jesus and the Twelve are in the Upper Room enjoying the Passover Feast. They're lounging side-by-side as they eat, talking, happily anticipating the redemption of Israel, and singing. In the middle of their intimate celebration Jesus gives the unbelievably bad news that one of them will betray him to be apprehended by enemies. Judas is the traitor! Then Jesus institutes communion by breaking bread and passing the cup of wine, saying they are his body and blood. In this way he gives himself for them all, apparently including even Judas. (Matthew, Mark, and John imply this.)

Ask For the Grace: Father God, I ask for the grace I desire: for sorrow, regret, and confusion because the Lord is going to his Passion for my sins.

Imagine Yourself in the Gospel: Matthew 26 (MSG)

20-21 After sunset, he and the Twelve were sitting around the table. During the meal, he said, “I have something hard but important to say to you: One of you is going to hand me over to the conspirators.”

22 They were stunned, and then began to ask, one after another, “It isn't me, is it, Master?”

23-24 Jesus answered, “The one who hands me over is someone I eat with daily, one who passes me food at the table. In one sense the Son of Man is entering into a way of treachery well-marked by the Scriptures—no surprises here. In another sense that man who turns him in, turns traitor to the Son of Man—better never to have been born than do this!”

25 Then Judas, already turned traitor, said, “It isn't me, is it, Rabbi?”

Jesus said, “Don't play games with me, Judas.”

26-29 During the meal, Jesus took and blessed the bread, broke it, and gave it to his disciples: “Take, eat. This is my body.”

Taking the cup and thanking God, he gave it to them: “Drink this, all of you. This is my blood, God's new covenant poured out for many people for the forgiveness of sins.”

“I'll not be drinking wine from this cup again until that new day when I'll drink with you in the kingdom of my Father.”

30 They sang a hymn and went directly to Mount Olives.

1st Reading: Visualize yourself in the Gospel story. Don't seek intellectual insights — stay with the imagery. Use your senses to see, touch, feel, and hear. What part of the story are you drawn to? Which character do you identify with? Or are you a bystander?

2nd Reading: Experience the story in the role of the character God led you to. Then talk with the Lord. What do you feel? How does this relate to something in your life today? What is God saying to you?