

## **DAY 14.**

*Christ, after having been regarded as nothing by Herod, is led back to Pilate.*

FROM Herod those savage wretches led Christ back to Pilate, and again brought their cruel charges against Him, that they might obtain His death-warrant. Again they tried to deafen Pilate with their horrid cries, since they could bring forward no just reason or cause against our Lord. By shouts and threats they sought to drown the truth, and to overcloud reason, and to darken justice. But Pilate, when he saw that the Jews sought through mere hatred to put Jesus to death, and that Herod in like manner had found no cause of death in Him, left nothing untried in order to set our Lord free. And because he could not appease the Jews by reasoning, he asked them whether, according to their privilege, they would have Him released in honor of the Paschal solemnity. But with one voice they all cried out that they would rather have Barabbas. O, great blindness! O, insatiable fury of the Jews! O, unhappy exchange! They chose a wolf instead of a lamb, a wicked and hateful wretch instead of a just and innocent man, an impious one, and a thief, instead of the Author of life. In like manner, all those who desire to persevere in their sins, and fear not to offend God, and to transgress His holy commandments, deny and reject God, and choose some cruel robber, like the devil, who is the destroyer of the souls of all who consent to do his bidding.

Then Pilate asked what he should do with Jesus. And, with a horrid roar, they cried, “Crucify Him, crucify Him!” Pilate answered, “What evil has He done? I find no cause of death in Him. But, to temper your burning rage and poisoned hatred, and to quench a little your thirst of blood, even without cause I will chastise and correct Him, that perhaps you may have compassion, and may cease to seek the death of this innocent Man, which He has not deserved.” Then Pilate delivered Christ to his ministers and torturers, so that they might scourge Him.

Come now, O my soul, and see with mourning heart, how your Bridegroom Jesus, the glory of heaven, is delivered into the cruel hands of vile servants, that they may carry out all their savage malice against Him. See how there are given to these raging and blood-thirsty dogs the power and the means of tearing to pieces that most pure, and noble, and virgin Body, and of shedding His royal Blood. See, how of His own will the Lord of lords gave Himself over, and subjected Himself to those abject wretches and vile slaves, suffering them to gorge all their malice and cruel tyranny upon Him: and obedient to His Father in heaven, even to death, He opened not His blessed mouth to curse them, or to murmur, or to complain, nor did He stretch forth His hands to avenge Himself, nor did any change of face betray either anger or indignation. See this, all you religious, who are stiff-necked, puffed up, and proud, who have put on indeed the outward look of obedient and religious men, but who are inwardly without resignation, dark, and given up to your own will. And, indeed, you show this forth when any command is laid upon you that is contrary to your ever-varying will, or your own judgment; for straightway you break out into complaints, impatience, and murmuring; and by word, and look, and the very impatient carriage and gestures of the body, betray clearly enough the depth of your refusal of resignation, and how much you love your own will. Nor have you known how to curb that nature of yours, which, far from being dead, is given up to your senses, or to hide it under the shelter of religion; for you have never manfully conquered it, nor have you brought your own will into servitude, and therefore both your nature and your will hold rule over you. And for this reason oftentimes you let your passions overflow, and you have no peace in your hearts. For your peace last no longer than while it is with you, and you are permitted to do what you gladly do, and to have what you gladly have. But I pray that you see, how willingly Christ offered Himself to death, and with what love He seized the bitter chalice of His Passion, although His nature shrank from it exceedingly; and how of His own accord He went forth to meet His enemies, and gave Himself into their hands, and suffered Himself to be taken, saying, "I am He whom you seek." Take example then from Him, and bend your proud and stiffened neck under the divine correction, and the commandments of God,

and of those who are set over you, and who hold the place of God towards you, for you may be sure that whatever contempt, or murmuring, or rebellion, your prelates may receive at your hand, will all be turned to the dishonor of our Lord God Most High.