

## **DAY 12.**

### *Jesus is delivered to Pilate.*

VERY early in the morning, at the first hour of the day, those blood-thirsty and cruel men met together, that they might deliver Jesus to death. Their pestilent envy and blood-thirstiness gave them no rest, while their mad rage so devoured and inflamed their hearts, that almost like mad dogs, they greedily thirsted after the innocent Blood of that meek Lamb. They led Him, therefore, into their council-chamber, and again questioned Him; and when they heard Him say that He was the Son of God, they cried out: “What further need do we have of witnesses? Out of His own mouth we have heard.” Then they led Him bound and shamefully disfigured to Pilate, to be condemned to death by that uncircumcised dog; that is to say that Pilate, when he saw Him so despised by the Jews, and condemned and cast off by the high-priests, might judge Him to be some wicked wretch, and so might indict Him, and sentence Him to death, and hand Him over wholly to the priests, to do with Him according to their will.

This then is the third procession of our Lord Jesus, which for our sakes He undertook in His Passion with sorrow unspeakable. See now, O my soul! with exceeding grief and compassion, how these violent men led your Lord God, chained and wretchedly disfigured, and marked all over with every sign of condemnation that they could think of, to Pilate the judge. Oh! who can think of the shame, and the reproach, and the affliction, and the annoyance, and the contempt which they caused our sweet Jesus to suffer on the way? Oh! with what humiliation did they lead the Lord of glory, Who is all honor and glory, to a profane and heathen man, to be condemned by him to death, just as if He had been the most wicked of robbers?

But when they had come to Pilate, without judgment, and without reason, they all with one accord barked out their false charges against our Lord Jesus, and heaped their lies upon Him, so that they might deafen Pilate with their noise, and obtain from him, by the clamor of their savage words, what by truth and justice they had not been able to obtain; and that Pilate, when he heard them all asking the same thing, might fear to oppose them all.

Come then, O all you faithful of Christ, I pray for you, and let us see how our Lord, like an innocent lamb, stood there, ready to be slain for the sake of our salvation. There sat Pilate, puffed up with pride of state, as His judge. On either side of them were placed His savage torturers, waiting for Pilate's sentence, ready to crucify and kill Him. Behind stood the wicked crowd of cruel Jews, roaring like lions, and uttering horrid cries. In the midst of them all, that meek Lamb opened not His blessed mouth to defend or excuse Himself, for He too was ready; ready, that is, to die for the salvation of those very wretches. With terrible eyes and cruel countenance did the cruel and wicked Jews scowl upon Him, and gnash their teeth; yet all the while our loving and tender Lord stood there in lowly shame, His eyes cast down, His hands bound, ready to drink the chalice which His Father had given Him. And Pilate, moved by such exceeding lowliness and patience, to disdain rather than to kindness, spoke to Christ roughly enough, and said: "Speak to me? Do you know that I have power to crucify You, and that I have power to let You go?" Ah! Who would not be kindled to humility, and patience, and love, at the sight of the Lord of lords, Who is to come to judge the living and the dead, standing there before that vile man, to be condemned by him, and bearing with such patience all that cruel wrong, and shame, and confusion, and contempt, and disgrace. Yet, wretched men that we are, we can hardly suffer one little word of reproach for the love of God! For when nothing is done against us by our enemies, for a whole year we carry in our hearts both anger and hatred, wasting ourselves wretchedly away by the very madness of our wrath. Nor do we heed, how

the Lord of Majesty suffers daily at our hands, reproach, and unfaithfulness, and wrong, and contempt, all the many times when we despise His holy commandments, and oppose His will, and neglect His grace, or receive it in vain, and when we daily crucify Him again, and mock Him, and pierce Him with cruel wounds, and shed His Sacred Blood. For we fear not to commit damnable and hateful sins, for which Christ suffered all this. Nevertheless, our gracious God is ever ready to take us back into His grace, to forgive us our sins, and not only to forgive, but to forget them, and so to forget them, as to confirm upon us even greater grace and friendship. For when we turn to Him with our whole hearts from our sins, Christ is ready to be our Intercessor and Advocate, and to place Himself between His Father's wrath and us, and our sins, and to offer Himself wholly with all His Passion to the Father for our trespasses and negligences. Yet we, puffed up and wretched, who are but ashes and dust, can hardly forgive the wrong of one little word, or look with calm eyes upon those who have offended us. Therefore God said well, that He will forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.