

## **DAY 9.**

### *Jesus is led to Caiaphas.*

AFTER this Annas sent Jesus bound to Caiaphas, who was the high-priest of that year. Here the chief priests and scribes and elders of the Jews had met together, for eagerly they thirsted to deliver Christ to death, and to shed His innocent Blood; and when they saw Him, they rejoiced like a lion that has caught its prey, and is ready to devour it. Now this was the second procession of our Savior. Follow now your Bridegroom, O my soul! Who, in order to espouse you underwent all this labor and torment. Nor will He remain with you for long. See, He is already given over into the hands of His cruel enemies, and of the Jews who are thirsting for His Blood, and who will not give over, until they shall fasten Him to the gallows of the Cross.

Gaze now upon that fair face of His, and press it to your heart, for yet a little while and there will be no more fairness in it at all, nor any beauty. Observe, I beg you, this sad procession, where these cruel dogs lead along the gentle Lamb, and this, we may firmly believe, they have done, as children of the devil, full of envy and madness, even as their father Satan had suggested to them and persuaded them. And because they had remained quiet for a little while, in the house of Annas, and had recovered their strength, now they began anew to vex our Lord on the way, and to mock Him, and to spit upon Him, and to pull His venerable beard and hair, and to throw Him down, and to trample on Him with their feet, and then, when He had fallen upon the ground, to drag Him along; in a word, to heap upon Him all the reproaches, and mockery, and annoyance, and injury that they could think of. Let us here consider in our hearts the agony which our sweet Jesus suffered in His Heart, how weary was His Body, how sick and ill were all His members from this grievous cruelty, and the exceeding great haste with which the Jews hurried Him along. For in all this agony and distress not

even a moment's space was given Him, in which He could draw even one breath; yet was He ever the same innocent, patient Lamb, Who gave Himself wholly up to their fury. Whose is the heart that can keep from tears, when he sees love, and lowliness, and patience such as this? Who would not be touched with compassion, and groan from his inmost heart, and proclaim himself guilty before high heaven, when he sees that he is himself the cause of such exceeding cruel suffering to his Lord? Thus then they led our Lord Jesus with all cruelty to Caiaphas, at whose house the chief priests and elders of the Jews had hurried together, as children of the devil, at their father's bidding. And because they had met in Satan's name to shed Christ's innocent Blood, therefore was that malignant one in the midst of them, inwardly spurring them on to all manner of cruelty and malice. See now, O my soul, how humbly the King of Glory stood there, His hands bound, His eyes cast down, His face pitiable and disfigured from the spittle and the blows, yet full of chaste shame, and loving thirst, and longing to drink the bitter chalice, and to accomplish His Father's will; and how those raging and cruel dogs gnashed at Him with their teeth, and glared at Him exceeding fierce looks. This is that of which our Lord complained by the mouth of His prophet, when He said: "They have taken thoughts together against Me, and looked on Me with fearful eyes; they have gaped upon Me with their mouths like a ravening and a roaring lion; they have gnashed upon Me with their teeth; they have sharpened their tongues like serpents, that they might vomit upon Me this poison." Ah! who can see without out sorrow of heart this innocent and weak Lamb standing alone among so many savage wolves, and think that He Who is the Son of God, and Lord of lords, to Whom belongs all judgment, is waiting for sentence of death to be passed upon Him by the vilest of His creatures, and wicked sinners? Oh! how their savage breasts burned with rage! How their souls overflowed with hatred, and their mouths with cursing and malice! How did envy darken their reason, spread thick clouds over their understanding, extinguish truth, keep down the judgment of their conscience, and all thoughts of religion! Oh! all the plots, and snares, and false-witness contrived against this guiltless Lamb, and drunk in by their cruel and poisoned thirst, in order that they might deliver over the Just One unto death! Yet our sweet Lord opened not His mouth, but gently and meekly bore for His Father's honor

all those wicked and foul lies, and blasphemies, and falsehoods, which they heaped upon Him. No excuse would He give, for He had taken upon Him all the sins of the world; and because it was His will to be crucified with the unjust, as an unjust man, it was also His will to be judged. Not even a word did He answer to all these false accusations, because out of His measureless love He thirsted with a burning thirst after man's salvation, and the chalice which His Father had given Him to drink; for clearly in His inner man He felt His Father drawing and calling Him, that Father to Whom He could not go, save by the road of His Passion. In truth, He had given and resigned Himself wholly up to His Father's will, and He suffered Him to work in Him, offering Himself in all things as His instrument, and listening in silence to what He was saying to His soul. For in His humanity He proved Himself a most fitting instrument to accomplish His Father's work, and all that He required of Him; even as He had taught His disciples not to fear, when they stood before kings and governors, nor to think what they should answer, but rather to wait for the Spirit of the Father, Who should teach them when and how to speak.

Then, when the false witnesses had been heard, and no cause of death found in our Lord, the wicked high-priest was troubled, and carried away by rage out of his seat, said unto our Lord: "I adjure You, by the living God, that You tell us whether You are Christ, the Son of God." Now when our Lord heard Himself addressed by His own divine Name, out of reverence to His Father, and by the Spirit shining in Him, He answered: "You have said that I am. Nevertheless I say unto you, you shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven." Then the high-priest rent his clothes, and said: "He had spoken blasphemy, what further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now you have heard His blasphemy. What do you think?" Then all those mad men with one voice cried out, and said: "He is guilty of death." And at the same time, running upon Him with one accord, as fierce lions upon some gentle lamb, they all loosened the reins of their envy, and vomited upon Him all their rage and hatred, without measure and without compassion. And one spat in His face, and another smote Him on the head, and another on the neck, while others again tore

His hair and His beard. Some, out of inborn malice, cruelly wounded His fair face with their nails. This, too, He had testified of old by His prophet, saying: "I turned not away My face from them who reproached Me and spat upon Me." And again, "I gave My cheeks to the pluckers." In truth they did upon Him what they would, nor could they deluge their cruel rage. No, had it been possible, in their mad fury they would have reduced Him to nothing. But His hour had not yet come.

It was a custom with the Jews, that when they wished to show contempt to a man, on account of his wickedness and guilt, they spat in his face, as if to avenge the wrong done to God. And this they too often did with intemperate cruelty, so as to take away the breath of not a few, and to suffocate them. Here, therefore, we are allowed to imagine, that this torment of our Lord was not less than death itself, and that in this grievous strait He would have been deprived of breath, had not His Godhead saved Him to suffer still greater punishments. For, as the Evangelist said, they not only spat, but they spat out, that is, they fetched their foul spittle from the depths of their chest, and cast it into His face, yes, and even into His blessed and most gentle mouth. What greater contempt or insult could they have shown the Lord of Glory? Never to any thief, or to any one condemned to death, had been shown such contempt, or derision, or shame, as was now shown to our Lord after His condemnation. With such indignities did they treat Him, that hardly the form of man remained to Him. And His fair face was so swollen from the blows, so beset with spittle, so crimsoned with blood, so torn by their nails, and likewise the blood and spittle were so mingled together, that our sweet Saviour's face was pitiable to behold, and would have moved a heart of stone to pity and compassion. And because the grace of His face had been such as by its mere look to soften sinners, and draw them unto Him, so those wicked men put a veil upon Him, that they might not be moved by any kind or pitiful feeling, but might pour forth according to their desire all their rage and cruelty upon Him. Therefore without mercy they cruelly struck Him, and at the same time mocking Him, said: "Behold our Prophet! Prophesy unto us, O Christ, who it is that struck You?" Thus whatever annoyance, and insult, and cruelty, they could conceive in their devilish heart, this they did to our most patient Lord. Nor even

yet was their thirst quenched, For after that they had vomited upon Him all the poison of their bitterness, and were themselves utterly tired and exhausted, they handed Him over to their servants, that they might spend the rest of the night in guarding Him, and annoying Him, while they themselves rested. But to our exhausted, and wearied, and agonizing Lord was no rest given, nor even breathing-time, but He was handed over to their wicked followers, who all that night inhumanly troubled Him. It is indeed the opinion of St. Jerome, that those annoyances and punishments which they inflicted on our Lord on that night, will only be made known at the day of judgment. Therefore, the devout who desire to meditate on our Lord's Passion, ought to do something in honor of those secret sufferings of God, and to offer them to the Eternal Father, to Whom they are well known, in satisfaction for their own secret and unknown sins.

Now then, O my soul, and as many as love Jesus, let us go and behold with inward sorrow, in what distress and affliction our sweet Jesus, the joy of heaven, then was. Where is the heart that can refrain from tears, when he sees the Lord of Glory, the King of Heaven, so basely treated? O beautiful in form above the sons of men, how are You deformed! You, Who are the mirror of eternal brightness, Whose beauty is the marvel of the elements, are led about covered with a vile and filthy linen cloth! In truth the prophet saw all this with great sorrow, when he said: "We have seen Him, and there was no beauty in Him. And we accounted Him as a leper, and as one smitten by God, and humbled." Let these words cut into your heart, O my soul, and set this exceedingly afflicted form or image before the eyes of your heart, and understand that so pitiable is it, that the prophet, although enlightened by God, could find no words to express it; but compared Him to a leper, at the very sight of whom, every one shrinks away. Yes! Christ's loving face was so swollen with the blows, so veiled in blood, so full of spittle, so cut and wounded by their fingernails, that there remained to Him no more the form of man, nor the beauty.

Let this Passion pierce your heart, O my soul, and let you be inflamed by the mighty love which worked all this. Be ashamed, O proud man, vile dung as you are, who seem to yourself to be somewhat forgetful all the while that you are dust, and ashes, and dirt, and less than nothing. See how the Son of God was humbled for your sins; how the glory of heaven, Whose majesty passes all understanding, for your sake was despised and set to be nothing. Observe, O you dust of earth, so greedy of revenge, so unyielding, so cruel and impatient, how the Lord of lords most patiently bore all this grievous affliction, and this too, at the hands of vile wretches, and worthless slaves, and for your sins. Certainly, in all this trouble and annoyance, you will not find that even once He contracted His forehead into wrinkles, or opened His mouth to curse, or stretched forth His hands to defend Himself. And you can not suffer even one little word for God's sake, without straightaway showing your anger by word, and deed, and sign, and gesture, and look. You confessed your sins to God, and He had mercy upon you, and took you back into His grace, and laid on you some little punishment by way of satisfaction. He permitted some cross to come to you, and desired that you should carry it for His sake in return for all the wrongs you have done, and brought upon Him by your sins. But straightaway you broke forth into complaints, murmurings, impatience, and are unwilling to carry the cross which God has laid upon you; no, you thought that you were wronged by God. What else is this, except, in reality and by your acts to declare, and to say that you will not perform the satisfaction laid on you by God, that you will rather after this life suffer punishment in flames of brimstone, than here undergo a little affliction? you have desired fire; the fire shall come to you; you rejected God's mercy, you shall not be able to find it. Here you despised His grace, afterwards you will feel His justice. For He said: "What will you profit from asking for grace, saying: 'Lord, Lord,' when all the while you do not do what I tell you?" In truth you would desire that in all things God should allow you to do your own will, to satisfy all your sensuality and lust; that He should fulfill every desire of your heart, and that not even one little harsh word should be spoken to you, and yet that through His merits all your iniquities should be forgiven, and that you yourself should be raised without any punishment to His eternal glory, as if you were worthy of it; in fact, you would wish Him

to submit Himself in all things to you, and to become unjust for your sake. But you are deceived, utterly deceived. Not at so low a price did He reckon His kingdom. It cost Him far too dear. It required Christ to suffer, and so to enter into His glory; if you refuse to suffer, remain outside. He said: "He who would come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me." Therefore, if in a true spirit you desire the grace of God, confess to Him your sins, hate and turn from your sins, lay yourself wholly open to His correction, and offer your whole self to Him, saying with the Prophet: "I am ready for scourges." Throw yourself on Him, ready for everything, and cheerfully with your own free will embrace the cross which He had laid upon you. Look not to its heaviness and trouble, but to Him, Who laid it on you; for truly, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Who had gone before you with His own cross, and to Whom your weakness is well known, will lay no burden upon you above your strength. For His nature is goodness, and He will be with you, and stand by your side in all your afflictions, as He had done to all the saints. He will not be unmindful of His mercy, if only you know how to lay aside your own will, your murmurings and complaints. Allow Him therefore to do with you as He wills, that He may perfect His work in you. And without doubt in your lowly subjection, He will show you much mercy, and the very depth of His compassion will be moved towards you, and He will pardon all your wanderings, and He will accept this your resignation and good will, even as of old He accepted that of our Father Abraham, when he took his only son to offer him to God, and He will spare you also, and show favor to you, even as He did to Abraham's son Isaac. For He desires exceedingly to give you His everlasting glory, yet it is His will that you should do somewhat yourself, that in justice this may be bestowed upon you; and what He wished you to do is this, to submit yourself to Him in obedience of heart, and to allow Him to perfect His work in you, and to keep His grace, lest it be frustrated in you. It was thus that we read of all the saints, how they suffered numberless evils, and led a severe and austere life, that they might be worthy to be joint-heirs with Christ in His Father's kingdom.

But now let us go back to our most loving Lord, from Whom for a little while we have wandered; and let the flood of our tears, which meanwhile had been stilled, now again be allowed lovingly to flow. What, O my soul, I pray, would you have done, had you been there, and had seen all that contempt and affliction cast upon your Lord? Would you not have run forward to Him out of burning love, and embraced Him, and washed His disfigured face with your tears, and lovingly kissed Him? Would you not have spoken to Him the kindest and most friendly words that you could think of, saying: “Sweet Jesus, my Lord and God, my heart can no longer bear that these wicked men should thus persecute, and despise, and inhumanly treat You. For exceeding sorrow my heart will break, if any longer I shall see You in such woe. O Jesus, my hope, my comfort and my love, Whom my soul loves, who will grant unto me, that I may suffer for You? It is not You Who has sinned, but I. O fairest and most beautiful of the sons of men, how full of shame, and disfigured, and without beauty, You are become! Where has Your beauty gone? Why are You humbled so? How has all this mighty guilt been laid upon You, to which You are utterly a stranger, and of which You are wholly innocent? See! it is the blood of our sins that is sprinkled on Your garments, and for us You Yourself have been made the reproach of men, and the outcast of the people. Who has delivered You over to these wolves? O my soul, will you not cleave to your Lord by these words with your whole body, will you not take Him in your arms and defend Him, will you not rebuke those wicked men, and say: “Ah! do not rage, I beg of you, with such exceeding cruelty against the Son of God, and the Lord of us all. Seize hold of me rather, and do to me whatever pleases you. For this innocent Lamb has not sinned. It is I who have sinned, and who am worthy of death. It is I whom you should spit upon, it is I whom you should mock, and strike, and persecute; on me satisfy your cruel thirst, on me quench your burning rage, on me accomplish all your hatred and poisonous malice, on me work out all your will,—only let my Lord Jesus go. For I cannot bear the contempt and wrong which you cast upon Him.” Oh! how could the Eternal Father bear to see the wrong and the shame of His glorious Son? Did He not fearfully avenge His Prophet Elisha, when he was mocked at by children, and this more from childish youthfulness than from malice? Yet His only and most dear Son He would not avenge,



but gave Him wholly up to the rage and malice of the Jews. O most loving Father, what is man that You love him so; that You have given over to these ravening dogs, so worshipful, and good and dear a Son, for the sake of a wicked and damnable sinner; that for the sins of Your people You have smitten Him so fearfully? Oh! how could Your fatherly Heart suffer Your most gracious Son, Who never did anything against Your will, to lie under the weight of the sins and debts of all Your people, and at the same time to drink to the bottom the chalice of bitterness and wrath, which our sins had mingled! How have You left Him in all His affliction, and cast Him off as an exile and an enemy, that we who were Your enemies and children of wrath, might be made Your friends and children of adoption? How is Your Heart so absorbed and drunk with love for man, that you see not how much Your only Son is suffering? Nothing moved You, though You are lavishing a treasure beyond all price, You cared for no labor, no sorrow, no expense, if only man may be saved. Therefore it is, that You have exposed and wholly given over to the will of wicked men, Your only-begotten Son, just as if you have cast Him from You in indignation, and adopted man in His stead.

O sweet Father, I offer you the measureless resignation and obedience of Your Son, Jesus Christ, and especially that immense love of His, whereby He willingly offered Himself to suffer all this intolerable affliction and torment; choosing to be forsaken by You, and chastised, and beaten, and inhumanly and cruelly chastised, in order that we might obtain mercy and peace. Likewise all those cruel blows, and mockings, and the spittle and derisions, and whatever your beloved Son underwent according to His Heart's desire on that bitter night, I offer You for my sins. O Father of mercies, have mercy upon me for Your dear Son's sake! For although I have sinned through weakness, yet now out of His love, Your Son has paid all my debt, for His goodness and love are stronger than all sin. Oh! if my sins were placed in one scale, and the merits of Your Son in another, the latter would far outweigh the former. Therefore, I beseech You, let His Passion be to my profit, since for my sake He suffered, and let His sacred wounds be a salve for my wounds. Let His most pure Blood wash away the filth of my heart; His humility blot out and excuse my pride; His obedience my disobedience, His patience

my impatience. O Abyss, from which flow all good things, grant me, by the name of Your dear Son, the grace to correct my evil life, and then to live according to Your most gracious will. Enlighten my blind heart with the shining rays of your divine light, that I may know my sins, and frailty, and vileness, and thus, knowing myself thoroughly, I may thoroughly humble, despise, and submit myself not only to You alone, but to all men for Your sake, so that I may faithfully follow the footsteps of Your dear Son's humility and obedience. Grant unto me, O my God, that I may perfectly deny and forsake myself, and all things that are lower than You, so far as is pleasing unto You, and so far as such things may be an obstacle in the way of my obtaining a perfect love of You; that I may love You, and that in this love nothing may come between me and You, and that I may be so fastened to You by the nails of pure love, that neither adversity nor prosperity, no, nor any affliction may be able in any way to separate me from You. Amen.