

✠ Matthew 26 – 27 ✠

IN NOMINE IESU

It is foolish to argue with a fool. You will never convince him of anything. He doesn't hear what is before him; he only hears what suits his purpose. So it is with those fools who tried our Lord and found Him guilty of nothing and crucified Him for less. Though God lets them hear His Word, their ears are stopped up with pride, false humility, and evil lusts. They cannot hear the grace of God though they themselves speak it. They do not understand the mercy of the Almighty though they themselves proclaim it. They are fools; they do not hear the voice of God or learn from His mercy. Pray that God open your ears.

Would that Judas listen to his own voice when he names our Lord, "Rabbi". If you, dear Judas, would stop and hear such truth you would be quick to stop your wicked errand, repent, and pay heed to the words spoken to you not four hours before: "This is my blood of the new covenant, shed for you, O Judas, for the forgiveness of sins." But God has given us a gift even from you, the faithless apostle, from you we learn to be humble lest we fall into the temptation and snare of the evil one and betray our Lord with a kiss, thinking we do good even while we sell our soul to the devil. O Lord, in your mercy let us call you 'Rabbi' with true faith and a willing heart.

And you, O Caiaphas, would that you listen to your own words! "It is better that one man die for the people than the whole nation perish." You meant, O Caiaphas, for people to think you were trying to protect the people from Rome, that she would not wipe your people out. But in truth you meant it only to rid yourself of an innocent man. You lie, Caiaphas. For you know that Rome tolerated religious thought and didn't care about backwater buffoonery. But God used your wickedness for the sake of His elect, to give them words with which to worship Him. It is true what you say, Caiaphas, it is better that Jesus die for us than for us to perish in eternal hellfire. Such are the thoughts of God who orchestrated this whole ordeal.

And you, o crowds, who begged for the release of a murderer and rebel, blessed be your words for those who have ears to hear! Though you spoke out of the evil of your hearts, not really caring about Barabbas, but only wishing that the Innocent One should die, God hears your words as a plea for mercy, sanctifies them and gives them to His Church. Yes, dear Pilate, release Barabbas; for I am Barabbas! You, o governor, are an agent of God, with authority only as it is given to you. It is not you who releases Barabbas, it is God who lets him go and mercifully takes his place on the cursed tree. In letting that filthy, vile murdering man free, you, though dumber than Balaam's ass, are a preacher of the Gospel, telling the world that Jesus takes the place of sinners, dying in their stead. You unwittingly proclaim liberty to me and to all who follow in the steps of Cain, murdering our brothers with hearts of hatred and calling evil what God has called good, imprisoned by the power of sin. Let that sinful scum go, for God has so ordained that the spotless Lamb should die for the filthy goats. Lord, have mercy upon us; Christ, have mercy upon us; Lord, have mercy upon us.

And for your words of bloodlust, we thank you, o men of Jerusalem. For the Church could not say it better. Though you spoke with unbridled evil and no fear of God, mockingly calling Jesus' blood down on your heads, God has sanctified your words also and given them to His holy Church who speaks them with pious humility: "Let His blood be on our heads!" O men of Jerusalem, that you would fear God! For by saying them with no fear of God, you cause His

blood to be a poison that chokes the life from you, and you join your brother, Judas, in the throws of misery and terror; the blood of the Innocent One condemning you.

But for we who weep tears of repentance because we have denied the Lord in the courtyard of life, we pray the blood of Jesus cover us and our children, to be for us a crimson flood cleansing us from sin and shame, that washes us white as snow. "Let your blood, O Jesus, be upon our heads and upon the heads of our children, and their children, and their children's children!" Blessed is he whose sin is covered by the blood of the Lamb.

And even you, o evil one, cannot thwart the purposes of the Almighty. Set the stone and seal the tomb, set the guard. For, yes, He promised that on the third day He would rise. But the fear of the wicked is the peace of the blessed. What bodes ominous for those who hate Him brings hope to those who love Him. Thank you, you wicked men, for sealing His tomb and setting the guard, for then we know that no man moved His body and that no trick was played, but that the seal was broken and the stone moved by One more powerful than garrisons of men. What you meant as an end to His reign, God used to establish His kingdom.

O the mercy of God! To take the evil of man and use it for his good. To take the wretched plans of wicked men and use them to bring about His salvation! It is good that one man should die or the people that we may all be saved.

Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, Hosanna in the highest! Come, O Crucified One, come quickly. Amen.

In the name of the FATHER and of the ✠ SON and of the HOLY SPIRIT.

✠ AMEN ✠