

Jesus led back from the Court of Herod to that of Pilate

The enemies of Jesus were perfectly infuriated at being obliged to take Jesus back, still uncondemned, to Pilate, who had so many times declared his innocence. They led him round by a much longer road, in order in the first place to let the persons of that part of the town see him in the state of ignominy to which he was reduced, and in the second place to give their emissaries more time to stir up the populace.



This road was extremely rough and uneven; and the soldiers, encouraged by the Pharisees, scarcely refrained a moment from tormenting Jesus. The long garment with which he was clothed impeded his steps, and caused him to fall heavily more than once; and his cruel guards, as also many among the brutal populace, instead of assisting him in his state of exhaustion, endeavoured by blows and kicks to force him to rise. To all these outrages Jesus offered not the smallest resistance; he prayed constantly to his Father for grace and strength that he might not sink under them, but accomplish the work of his Passion for our redemption. It was about eight o'clock when the procession reached the palace of Pilate. The crowd was dense, and the Pharisees might be seen walking to and fro, endeavouring to incite and infuriate them still more. Pilate, who remembered an insurrection which had taken place the year before at the Paschal time, had assembled upwards of a thousand soldiers, whom he posted around the Praetorium, the Forum, and his palace.

The Blessed Virgin, her elder sister Mary (the daughter of Heli), Mari (the daughter of Cleophas), Magdalen, and about twenty of the holy women, were standing in a room from whence they could see all which took place, and at first John was with them. The Pharisees led Jesus, still clothed in the fool's garment, through the midst of the insolent mob, and had done all in their power to gather together the most vile and wicked of miscreants from among the dregs of the people. A servant sent by Herod had already reached Pilate, with a message to the effect that his master had fully

appreciated his polite deference to his opinion, but that he looked upon the far famed Galilean as not better than a fool, that he had treated him as such, and now sent him back. Pilate was quite satisfied at finding that Herod had come to the same conclusion as himself, and therefore returned a polite message. From that hour they became friends, having been enemies many years; in fact, ever since the falling-in of the aqueduct.

[The cause of the quarrel between Pilate and Herod was, according to the account of Sister Emmerich, simply this: Pilate had undertaken to build an aqueduct on the south-east side of the mountain on which the Temple stood, at the edge of the torrent into which the waters of the pool of Bethsaida emptied themselves, and this aqueduct was to carry off the refuse of the Temple. Herod, through the medium of one of his confidants, who was a member of the Sanhedrin, agreed to furnish him with the necessary materials, as also with twenty-eight architects, who were also Herodians. His aim was to set the Jews still more against the Roman governor, by causing the undertaking to fail. He accordingly came to a private understanding with the architects, who agreed to construct the aqueduct in such a manner that it would be certain to fail. When the work was almost finished, and a number of bricklayers from Ophel were busily employed in removing the scaffolding, the twenty-eight builders went on to the top of the Tower of Siloe to contemplate the crash which they knew must take place. Not only did the whole of the building crumble to pieces, fall, and kill ninety-three workmen, but even the tower containing the twenty-eight architects came down, and not one escaped death.

This accident occurred a short time previous to the 8th of January, two years after Jesus had commenced preaching; it took place on Herod's birthday, the same day that John the Baptist was beheaded in the Castle of Marcherunt. No Roman officer attended these festivities on account of the affair of the aqueduct, although Pilate had, with hypocritical politeness, been requested to take a part in them. Sister Emmerich saw some of the disciples of Jesus carry the news of this event into Samaria, where he was teaching, on the 8th of January.

Jesus went from thence to Hebron, to comfort the family of John; and she saw him, on the 13th of January, cure many among the workmen of Ophel who had been injured by the fall of the aqueduct. We have seen by the relation previously given how little gratitude they showed him. The enmity of Herod towards Pilate was still farther increased by the manner in which the latter revenged himself on the followers of Herod. We will insert here a few details which were communicated at different times to

Sister Emmerich. On the 25th of March, of the second year of our Lord's preaching, when Jesus and his disciples were in the neighbourhood of Bethania, they were warned by Lazarus that Judas of Gaulon intended to excite an insurrection against Pilate.

On the 28th of March, Pilate issued a proclamation to the effect that he intended to impose a tax, the proceeds of which were partly to cover the expenses he had incurred in raising the building which had just fallen to the ground. This announcement was followed by a sedition headed by Judas of Gaulon, who always stood up for liberty, and who was (unknown to himself) a tool in the hands of the Herodians. The Herodians were rather like our Freemasons. On the 30th of March, at ten o'clock p.m., Jesus, dressed in a dark garment, was teaching in the Temple, with his Apostles and thirty disciples. The revolt of the Galileans against Pilate burst forth on this very day, and the rebels set free fifty of their number who had been imprisoned the day before; and many among the Romans were killed. On the 6th of April, Pilate caused the Galileans to be massacred at the moment of offering sacrifice, by disguised soldiers whom he had concealed in the Temple. Judas was killed with his companions. This massacre exasperated Herod still more against Pilate, and we have just seen by what means their reconciliation was effected.]

Jesus was again led to the house of Pilate. The archers dragged him up the stairs with their usual brutality; his feet became entangled in his long robe, and he fell upon the white marble steps, which were stained with blood from his sacred head. His enemies had again taken their seats at the entrance of the forum; the mob laughed at his fall, and the archers truck their innocent victim, instead of assisting him to rise. Pilate was reclining on a species of easy-chair, with a little table before him, and surrounded with officers and persons who held strips of parchment covered with writing in their hands. He came forward and said to the accusers of Jesus: 'You have presented unto me this man, as one that perverteth the people, and behold I, having examined him before you, find no cause in this man in those things wherein you accuse him. No, nor Herod neither. For I sent you to him, and behold, nothing worthy of death is done to him. I will chastise him, therefore, and release him.' When the Pharisees heard these words, they became furious, and endeavoured to the utmost of their power to persuade the people to revolt, distributing money among them to effect this purpose. Pilate looked around with contempt, and addressed them in scornful words.

It happened to be the precise time when, according to an ancient custom, the people had the privilege of demanding the deliverance of one prisoner. The Pharisees had dispatched emissaries to persuade the people to demand the death, and not the life, of our Lord. Pilate hoped that they would ask for Jesus, and determined to give them to choose between him and a criminal called Barabbas, who had been convicted of a dreadful murder committed during a sedition, as also of many other crimes, and was, moreover, detested by the people.

There was considerable excitement among the crowd; a certain portion came forward, and their orators, addressing Pilate in a loud voice, said: 'Grant us the favour you have always granted on the festival day.' Pilate made answer: 'It is customary for me to deliver to you a criminal at the Paschal time; whom will you that I release to you, Barabbas, or Jesus that is called Christ?' Although Pilate did not in his own mind feel at all certain that Jesus was the King of the Jews, yet he called him so, partly because his Roman pride made him take delight in humbling the Jews by calling such a despicable-looking person their king; and partly because he felt a kind of inward belief that Jesus might really be that miraculous king, that Messiah who had been promised. He saw plainly that the priests were incited by envy alone in their accusations against Jesus; this made him most anxious to disappoint them; and the desire was increased by that glimmering of the truth which partly enlightened his mind.

There was some hesitation among the crowd when Pilate asked this question, and a few voices answered, 'Barabbas.' A servant sent by Pilate's wife asked for him at this moment; he left the platform, and the messenger presented the pledge which he had given her, saying at the same time: 'Claudia Procles begs you to remember your promise this morning.' The Pharisees and the priests walked anxiously and hastily about among the crowd, threatening some and ordering others, although, in fact, little was required to incite the already infuriated multitude. Mary, with Magdalen, John, and the holy women, stood in a corner of the forum, trembling and weeping; for although the Mother of Jesus was fully aware that the redemption of man could not be brought about by any other means than the death of her Son, yet she was filled with the anguish of a mother, and with a longing desire to save him from those tortures and from that death which he was about to suffer. She prayed God not to allow such a fearful crime to be perpetrated; she repeated the words of Jesus in the Garden of Olives: 'If it is possible, let this chalice pass away.' She still felt a glimmering of hope,

because there was a report current that Pilate wished to acquit Jesus. Groups of persons, mostly inhabitants of Capharnaum, where Jesus had taught, and among whom he had wrought so many miraculous cures, were congregated in her vicinity; they pretended not to remember either her or her weeping companions; they simply cast a glance now and then, as if by chance, at their closely-veiled figures. Many thought, as did her companions likewise, that these persons at least would reject Barabbas, and beg for the life of their Saviour and Benefactor; but these hopes were, alas, fallacious. Pilate sent back the pledge to his wife, as an assurance of his intention to keep his promise. He again came forward on the platform, and seated himself at the little table. The Chief Priests took their seats likewise, and Pilate once more demanded: 'Which of the two am I to deliver up to you?' A general cry resounded through the hall: 'Not this man, but Barabbas!' 'But what am I to do with Jesus, who is called Christ?' replied Pilate. All exclaimed in a tumultuous manner: 'Let him be crucified! Let him be crucified!' 'But what evil has he done?' asked Pilate for the third time. 'I find no cause in him. I will scourge and then acquit him.' But the cry, 'Crucify him! Crucify him!' burst from the crowd, and the sounds echoed like an infernal tempest; the High Priests and the Pharisees vociferated and hurried backwards and forwards as if insane. Pilate at last yielded; his weak pusillanimous character could not withstand such violent demonstrations; he delivered up Barabbas to the people, and condemned Jesus to be scourged.