

Scenes from The Passion: A Versified Meditation on Things Memorable in the
Sufferings and Death of Our Blessed Lord, 1957 A+D
Tune: O Lamm Gottes Unschuldig

Scene 1: The Agony

By Gethsemane's starlight
Reveal'd a vigil lonely,
Constant kept into far night;
None wakes but Jesus only:
More sobb'd His pray'rs than spoken,
And bloody sweat a token
Of His heart broken
By tomorrow's
Destin'd sorrows.

Here in spirit beside Thee
I kneel, Christ tempted fearful;
May Thy agony guide me,
Likewise oft render'd tearful,
To drink, when not inclin-ed
What cup of woe assign-ed
By God design-ed
Tho' distressing,
For my blessing.

Scene 2: The Betrayal

Faithless friends wake from sleeping;
Most faithless he who meets them.
Bargain made bent on keeping,
As brazenly he greets them.
A kiss he gives The Master:
Sweet prelude to disaster.
What treach'ry vaster
Ever worsely
Tried God's mercy!

It is I, Lord, need mainly
Thy merciful compassion;
Oft do I, just as plainly,
Betray Thee in some fashion.
Of sinners chief, I need Thee
To gain the grace decreed me.
If full to freed be
From the terrors
Of my errors.

Scene 3: The Arrest

Foes advance in defiance,
The night with curses rending;
Christ's disciples' reliance
Rests on the sword extending.
The rant Our Lord and rages
Of friend and foe assuages;
Calm disengages
Self, to tender
His surrender.

Lord, as once Thou didst offer
Thyself to foe and fetter,
I myself to Thee proffer,
Constrain'd to serve Thee better,
With greater consecration:
My whole life an oblation
For the salvation
Thou didst win me,
Set from sin free!

Scene 4: The Arraignment

By fierce foe sorely taunted,
The Son Of Man to judgment
Swift is led" there confronted
With undisguis'd begrudgment
'Gainst what He clear contended:
That He is God, descended
To earth, and ended
Condemnation;
Come salvation.

Saviour mine, I believe Thee:
Thy bonds my liberation
From all sin; I receive free
Thy Father's approbation;
Thy sacrifice avails me
When conscience' voice assails me;
Life, when life fails me,
I'll inherit
Thro' Thy merit.

Scene 5: The Denial

Coward he, at a distance
Our Lord's disciple ventures
Him to follow; assistance
To lend he dreads, lest censures
He meet. The foe defies him;
Three times he fierce denies Him.
Jesus espies him;
Eyes, once sleeping,
Now are weeping.

Likewise I, Jesus, tearful
Confess, with deep repentance,
Dark denials and fearful
In tho't, in deed, in sentence,
Of Thee, for whom I'm nam-ed
In cowardice exclaim-ed
I am asham-ed
May, to shrive me,
Mercy drive Thee!

Scene 6: The Accusation

Hear vile voices accuse Him!
Hear Christ reply with candor!
Hear His foes, to confuse Him,
Resort to lie and slander!
Hear how each contradiction
Brands all their clamor fiction
To haste conviction:
At such railing
Justice failing!

Each injustice, sweet Jesus,
Was for mankind endur-ed
Sinners we, Thy guilt frees us.
Had all this ne'er occur-ed,
We still would live divided
From God, and die unguided;
Thy fate decided
Him above us
E'er to love us.

Scene 7: The Suicide

Silver pieces lie scatter'd
On yonder temple pavement:
Proof of faith fully shatter'd,
To sin complete enslavement.
And there, with none much caring,
Hangs Judas, clean despairing,
E'en dead declaring
His confession
Of transgression.

From like fate, Jesus, keep me,
However much I grieve Thee;
Tho' I oft pain Thee deeply,
From dark despair retrieve me;
Thy grace support me ever!
Me shall temptation never
From Thy love sever:
This assurance
Give endurance!

Scene 8: The Examination

King of kings, see Him standing
Abject before His creatures,
Loud in voices demanding
His death; yet on His features
A majesty resplendent,
Accuser more attendant
Than mere defendant.
Pilate, own Him
God! Enthroned Him!

Lord of lords I confess Thee,
O'er all things seen and unseen
Potentate! I address Thee,
Tho' vile with sin and unclean,
From out the dust, imploring
Thy feet to kiss, adoring
Love thus outpouring;
Sov'reign own Thee
And enthrone Thee!

Scene 9: The Choice

To the rabble uproarious
A fateful choice is granted
‘Twixt a murd’rer notorious
And Christ. Of Him is chanted”
“Away with this Man! Nail Him
Upon a cross! Impale Him
Till life shall fail Him!”
At such voices
Hell rejoices.

Yet oft in mine own choosing
I cast my lot, full knowing,
‘Gainst my Saviour, abusing
His mercy; thereby showing
That I, too, oft deny Him,
Repeated crucify Him,
And bold decry Him.
Such behavior
Tow’rds my Saviour!

Scene 10: The Torture

Scourging post, lately us-ed,
In scarlet stain stands drench-ed,
Whereon Christ was abus-ed,
His frame by lashing wrench-ed,
In gore His garments drown-ed,
His head with briars crown-ed:
Symbols renown-ed
Of the fashion
Of His passion.

Lamb of God, this petition
We humbly bring before Thee:
IN life’s ev’ry condition –
When sorrows plague us sorely,
When soul is sick with sighing,
When eyes are red from crying,
And when we’re dying –
Thy most precious
Blood refresh us!

Scene 11: The Condemnation

Long revil'd, sternly scourg-ed,
By thorn and lashings riven,
Condemnation is urg-ed,
And condemnation given.
That God's Son man's affliction
Must heal, true to prediction,
By crucifixion,
Angels yonder
Ceaseless ponder.

So shall I ever ponder
This truth, all truth transcending,
Filling soul full of wonder,
That I, with doom impending,
By Jesus' condemnation
Therefrom escap'd; salvation
My destination
In and will bem
From all ills free!

Scene 12: The Crucifixion

Calvary in the distance
Looms big. The Saviour stumbles;
Foes press into assistance
One Simon. Jesus humbles
Himself, in sorrow pining,
By on the cross reclining,
Fully resigning,
Bitter sighing,
Self to dying.

Hail, my Saviour most holy!
Hail, Thou the world's redemption!
Thro' Thy sacrifice solely
I claim me full exemption
From all the fears that haunt me,
From Satan's threats that taunt me;
Proudly I'll vaunt me
Of eternal
Bliss supernal!

Scene 13: The Watch

Read Rome's plain accusation!
See guards His garments parting!
Hear one thief's defamation,
The other's humble heart sing!
Mark Mother Mary bless-ed
By her dear Son address-ed
Thus much carress-ed
In her weeping,
Watch there keeping!

Likewise keep I my station
Beneath the cross, my glory;
Yet would leave, ev'ry nation
To tell its wondrous story.
How can I tarry, knowing,
With time relentless flowing,
That souls are going
To infernal
Pain eternal!

Scene 14: The Darkness

Comes high noon, comes a darkness,
The sun its rays withholding,
To the end that men mark less
What terror here unfolding;
Thus nature shows affection
By giving Christ protection
In His dejection –
Utter shaken,
Godforsaken.

When death's gloom comes stealing
Across my own life's noonday,
Lord, Thy glory revealing,
Be Thou my light! Then soon may
I raise mine eyelids tearless
To visions pure and peerless!
Thus will life, fearless
Thee commended,
Well be ended!

Scene 15: The Exhalation

Time runs on; Christ continues
His life mid pain horrendous.
Time stands still: to his sinews
Comes death – O truth stupendous!
His mission now completed,
The Evil Foe defeated,
Christ's soul is greeted
By the legions
In heav'n's regions!

Sing, sing, sing, heart within me,
Sing till all singing fail thee:
Christ's death from death did win thee!
Of ev'ry breath avail thee
TO voice thine exultation!
In heaven's occupation
Find thine elation!
Of what God wro't
Sing, and cease not!

Scene 16: The Thrust

Life is sweet, hard the dying
For them with Christ suspended;
Broke their limbs, ere mid crying
Heartbeat and breath are ended.
This hurt Our Lord is spar-ed
As prophet had declar-ed;
Yet one hand dar-ed
With a lance bold
Pierce His heart cold.

Break, O Lord, in Thy kindness
All vices that attend me!
Break my will, that I find less
Occasion to offend Thee!
Break my poor heart, if need be:
With lance of sorrow bleed me,
If this but lead me
To the haven
Of Thy heaven!

Scene 17: The Deposition

From the rude rood release-ed
Dear burden thereon nail-ed,
Wherein life utter ceas-ed;
By friends bereft bewail-ed,
In linen clean encas-ed,
With myrrh and aloes grac-ed;
Then gently plac-ed
In the great gloom
Of the cold tomb.

Better bed Thine prepar-ed,
Lord, in my heart's recesses!
Find it soft and unshar-ed
Save for my soul's caresses;
Adorn'd with faith victorious,
O'erlaid with hope most glorious,
Perfum'd luxurious
With love ever!
Leave it never!

Scene 18: The Wake

Earth's day done, Joseph's garden
Lies deep in darkness sleeping'
Lingers none: Roman guardsmen
Alone a watch are keeping.
Alone? Likewise forsaketh
God Father sleep, and waketh
Till glorious breaketh
Easter Sunday:
God The Son's day!

Sleep not, Lord, while I'm living,
Be tears my lot or laughter,
All things needful me giving
My tasks to follow after!
Nor sleep when I be dying,
That, on Thy grace relying,
I, homeward flying,
May the blest see,
And at rest be!