

The Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ According to St. Matthew

Matthew 27:1-54

The customary responses before and after the Gospel are omitted.

*The congregation is seated for the first part of the Passion story.
The congregation takes the part of the crowd, and should read with boldness.*

Narrator ¹When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death: ²and when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor. ³Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, ⁴saying,

Judas I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood.

Narrator And they said,

Priest What is that to us? See thou to that.

Narrator ⁵And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself. ⁶And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said,

Priest It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood.

Narrator ⁷And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. ⁸Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day. ⁹Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value; ¹⁰and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me. ¹¹And Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying,

Pilate Art thou the King of the Jews?

Narrator Jesus said unto him,

Jesus Thou sayest.

Narrator ¹² And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. ¹³ Then said Pilate unto him,

Pilate Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee?

Narrator ¹⁴ And he answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly. ¹⁵ Now at that feast the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would. ¹⁶ And they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas. ¹⁷ Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them,

Pilate Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?

Narrator ¹⁸ For he knew that for envy they had delivered him. ¹⁹ When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying,

Wife Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.

Narrator ²⁰ But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus. ²¹ The governor answered and said unto them,

Pilate Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you?

Narrator They said,

Crowd Barabbas.

Narrator ²² Pilate saith unto them,

Pilate What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?

Narrator They all say unto him,

Crowd Let him be crucified!

Narrator ²³ And the governor said,

Pilate Why, what evil hath he done?

Narrator But they cried out the more, saying,

Crowd Let him be crucified!

Narrator ²⁴ When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying,

Pilate I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it.

Narrator ²⁵ Then answered all the people, and said,

Crowd His blood be on us and on our children!

Narrator ²⁶ Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified. ²⁷ Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers. ²⁸ And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe. ²⁹ And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying,

Readers Hail, King of the Jews!

Narrator ³⁰ And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head. ³¹ And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him. ³² And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross.

All Stand

Narrator ³³ And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull, ³⁴ they gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink. ³⁵ And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots. ³⁶ And sitting down they watched him there; ³⁷ and set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. ³⁸ Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left. ³⁹ And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, ⁴⁰ and saying,

Crowd Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.

Narrator ⁴¹ Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said,

Priest ⁴² He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. ⁴³ He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.

Narrator ⁴⁴ The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth. ⁴⁵ Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. ⁴⁶ And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice,

Jesus Eli, Eli, la´ma sabach-tha´ni?

Narrator that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?
⁴⁷ Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said,

Bystander This man calleth for Elijah.

Narrator ⁴⁸ And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. ⁴⁹ The rest said,

Priest Let be, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him.

Narrator ⁵⁰ Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up his spirit.

Silence is kept.

Narrator ⁵¹ And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; ⁵² and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, ⁵³ and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. ⁵⁴ Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying,

Crowd Truly this was the Son of God!