

By His Wounds we have been Healed

The Holy Spirit spoke by the prophet Isaiah about our Lord's death and burial, "*He assigned His grave with wicked people but was with a rich man in His death, although He had done nothing violent, and there was no deceit in His mouth*" (Is. 53:9). By this, the circumstances of our Lord's death were foretold, how He would be killed beside criminals and be buried in Joseph of Arimathea's new tomb. Isaiah said that these things would happen, even though Jesus had neither done any violence or ever spoken any lie. In other words, there was no sin in Him, no guilt worthy of death. This is a fact that even Pontius Pilate, Roman governor of Judea, recognised.

On Holy Thursday, Jesus was betrayed into the hands of sinful men. The one who betrayed Him was one of His own disciples; He betrayed Him with a kiss. The soldiers bound Jesus and dragged Him to the household of the high priest. They placed Jesus on trial, which was a sham. It was filled with false testimony, and those who made the lies about Jesus weren't even in agreement among themselves. It was determined that Jesus must be put to death for His crimes. As it was unlawful for them to carry out that sentence themselves, early on Friday morning, they led Jesus to Pilate.

Pilate examined Jesus and the complaints against Him. This was the conclusion he came to, "*I do not find any ground for complaint in Him*" (John 18:38). Though he was not a Christian, Pilate, by his words, acknowledged what the Holy Spirit had said through Isaiah to be true. There was no guilt in Jesus. St. Peter wrote the same, "*[Jesus] committed no sin, neither was deceit found in His mouth*" (1 Pt. 2:22) St. John spoke likewise, saying, "*In [Jesus] there is no sin*" (1 Jn. 3:5).

The crowd was displeased at Pilate's findings, so he wavered and had Jesus flogged. Pilate's soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns; then they put it on Jesus' head along with a purple robe – the colour of kings. They spit on Him and hit Him.

Pilate brought Jesus out in the thorny crown and robe and testified, "*Look! I am bringing Him out to you, that you may know that I find no cause for complaint in Him*" (John 19:4). This enraged the crowd. They cried out, "*Crucify, Crucify!*" One last time, Pilate responded, "*Take Him yourselves and crucify Him! For I do not find any basis for a charge against Him*" (John 19:6). Three times Pilate confessed that Jesus was without guilt. He did not deserve to die. He had no sin. Yet, "*He assigned His grave with wicked people but was with a rich man in His death*" (Is. 53:9).

After Pilate confessed that Jesus was without guilt, he handed Him over to be crucified. They made Him carry His own cross to Golgotha. There, they stripped Him naked and nailed His hands and feet to the cross. Although He had committed no crime, our Lord died a criminal's death with criminals on either side of Him. This was an excruciating, humiliating death. It was a death He did not deserve. It was a death we deserve.

Our good and gracious Father created all things that exist. He formed our first father from the dust of the earth and breathed into him the breath of life. Our first mother, Eve, was formed by God from Adam's side. They were created perfect. They had the ability to fear, love and trust in God above all things, but they didn't. They doubted and disobeyed God's Word, and subjected all creation to the corruption of sin. Beginning with Cain and Abel, all human beings are born bearing the image of Adam, the corruption of original sin. Original sin is that corruption of the flesh that resides within each of us, tempting us, driving us, enticing us to doubt and disobey God's Word – to hate it and Him, just like our first parents. And we have. All of us.

The Lord has revealed Himself to us, He has told us what is good and right and true, and we have spit on it. What else is sinning other than rejecting what God has said? Each time we have sinned, we have said that we knew better and our wants were better than God's. We have sinned in the past and enjoyed it. We still sin and we do enjoy it. Hear now what God says about those who sin. "*The soul who sins will die*" (Ezek. 18:20). Our Lord speaks not just of temporal death for those who sin, but of an everlasting condemnation and an eternity of torment in hell. Our God's righteous decree is that everyone who sins deserves to die. We deserve to die.

Jesus did not sin, there was no guilt in Him; He did not deserve to die. But He did – for us. Jesus took upon and in Himself our sin. All of it. Every evil thought, every malicious deed, every careless word. Jesus took it all. St. Paul says that God "*made Him to be sin*" for our sake (2 Cor. 5:21). Jesus took upon Himself our every sin, the wrath of God stored up in heaven to be poured out on us on the Last Day, instead, was poured out on Him on the cross. By His wounds, we have been healed.