

Today is the day. Heaven and earth joined in an apocalyptic event. . Everything is drawn into a single point: the cross. Every moment coalesces on this one day. All of history focuses on this one death. Heaven and earth are all suspended in silent waiting to see the spectacle of the Son of God dying. It dwarfs anything ever conceived in spectacular video effects of the movies. The angels await the outcome of the struggle for salvation. The rocks explode with the tension. The sun hides its face from the dreadful scene. Some graves even open up, cannot possess their dead any longer. The Son of God is suspended between earth and heaven, bearing the burden of the one and the holiness of the other. This is the story that gives meaning to every other. This is the story that gives all meaning to all human history. This is the story that gives all meaning to you.

It is clear throughout the Passion of our Lord that none of these events happen by accident. None of these things unfold or transpire apart from the Will of the Father and the Son. Each of the holy Evangelists has made that clear in his own way, but none more so than St. John, not only in the way he describes these events, but in the Words of our Lord throughout the Holy Gospel and in the course of His Passion. It is made clear, as Jesus Himself says at one point, that no one takes His life from Him, but He lays it down willingly, and He will take it up again.

It is not simply He knows ahead of time what is going to happen. He wills what is going to happen. His Father hands Him over for the salvation of mankind, and the Son of God -in love for His Father, and in love for you, for all people -willingly hands Himself over to death.

There is no other way to forgive you, love you, save you, give you life. It will cost God. Certainly not as though any of this were necessary for His own benefit. He lacked nothing. He needed nothing. There was nothing that He had to do for Himself. There is only what He chose to do in His divine and holy love, that He should save you from your sins and death and give to you eternal Life.

That is why all of these things happen. It is the fulfillment of God's creative purpose, God's good and gracious will, His holy intention from the very beginning. So is it also the fulfillment of all that God has spoken and promised throughout the Holy Scriptures -as He promised

to our first parents in the Garden of Eden following their fall into sin, as He repeated by the mouth of His Prophets, Apostles throughout the ages, even down to us -that God and Man should be perfectly united and brought together, in peace and reconciliation.

That union of God and Man is already perfectly accomplished in the Person of Christ Jesus, the incarnate Son of God, true God and true Man and now that comes to you in Him, in Sacraments from His cross, by His Word.

How easily we delude ourselves into thinking this crime is someone else's fault. We always want to blame someone, as long as that someone isn't me. "They" did this, I did not.

What have you done? You are there in the passion? You are Pontius Pilate who wavers about the existence of one truth, pressured not to do the right things and afraid of what others might think? You are the crowd, one moment saying hosannas and so quick to intentionally act against God's Word. You are sleepy disciples who cannot keep watch, especially in your homes; who even hide scared that He won't take care of you in the midst of danger and fail in your duty to stand-up. You are Peter denying our Lord in your actions and words in your home and workplace. You are Barabbas, condemned, who deserves to die. You are the mockers with sins against Him. You are the robber hanging with Him to question how Jesus works. You are Joseph of Arimathea and so many others that love glory that comes from man, more than glory from God, that is why you are silent when you should confess your Lord and His truth.

An amazing truth is that you are in them all. And you are the women, who mourn evil and follow Him. You are sleepy, weak disciples who are strengthened by His Word, You are Peter who weeps your failures, like Joseph to desire to honor the Lord, like Mary to not leave the cross, you are the crowd -with a different intent- that cried out His blood be upon us and our children. Like Barabbas you are freed from your guilt and death sentence. You are the centurion to declare He is innocent, and the only righteous one. And you are the thief who confesses your Lord and will be with Him in paradise. You are the people of the passion. No, the sin is not "theirs." It is yours. And so is His salvation.

