



Eighth Hour: Midnight to 1 AM

Jesus is arrested

O my Jesus, it is already midnight. You feel that your enemies are drawing near; tidying Yourself up and drying up your Blood, strengthened by the comforts received, You go to your disciples again. You call them, You admonish them, and You take them with You, as You go to meet your enemies, wanting to repair, with your promptness, my slowness, indolence and laziness in working and suffering for love of You.

But, O sweet Jesus, my Good, what a touching scene I see! You first meet the perfidious Judas, who, drawing near You and throwing his arms around your neck, greets You and kisses You. And You, most passionate Love, do not disdain to kiss those infernal lips; You embrace him and press him to your Heart, wanting to snatch him from hell, and giving him signs of new love. My Jesus, how is it possible not to love You? The tenderness of your love is such that it should snatch every heart to love You; yet, they do not love You! And You, O my Jesus, in bearing this kiss of Judas, repair for the betrayals, the pretenses, the deceptions under the aspect of friendship and sanctity, especially of priests. Your kiss, then, shows that, not to one sinner, provided that he comes humbled before You, would You refuse your forgiveness.

My most tender Jesus, You now give Yourself into the hands of the enemies, giving them the power to make You suffer whatever they want. I too, O my Jesus, give myself into your hands, that You may do with me, freely, whatever You best please; and together with You, I want to follow your Will, your reparations, and suffer your pains. I want to be always around You, that there may be no offense which I do not repair; no bitterness which I do not soothe; no spit or blows that You receive, which are not followed by one kiss and caress of mine. In the falls You will suffer, my hands will always be ready to help You in order to lift You. So, I want to be always with You, O my Jesus; I do not want to leave You alone even for one minute. And to be more certain, place me inside of Yourself, and I will be in your mind, in your gazes, in your Heart, and in all of You, so that whatever You do, I may do as well. In this way, I will be able to keep You faithful company, and nothing of your pains will escape me, in order to give You my return of love for everything.

My sweet Good, I will be at your side to defend You, to learn your teachings, to count, one by one, all of your words. Ah, how sweetly does the word with which You addressed Judas, descend into my heart: "Friend, why have you come?" And I feel that You address me too with the same word - not calling me friend, but by the sweet name of child: "Child, why have you come?"; to hear me answer: "Jesus - to love You". "Why have you come?", You repeat to me when I wake up in the morning; "Why have you come?", if I pray; "Why have you come?", You repeat to me in the Holy Host, if I come to receive You into my heart.

What a beautiful call for me and for all! But how many, to your "Why have you come?", answer: "I come to offend You!" Others, pretending not to hear You, give themselves to all kinds of sins, and answer your "Why have you come?", by going to hell! How much compassion I feel for You, O my Jesus! I would like to take the very ropes with which your enemies are about to bind You, in order to bind these souls and spare You this sorrow.

But, again, I hear your most tender voice which says, as You go to meet your enemies: "Who are you looking for?" And they answer: "Jesus the Nazarene". And You, to them: "It is I". With only this word You say everything, and You let Yourself be known for who You are; so much so, that the enemies tremble and fall to the ground, as though dead. And You, Love which has no equal, repeating again, "It is I", call them back to life and You give Yourself, on your own, into the power of the enemies. Perfidious and ungrateful, instead of falling to your feet, humbled and palpitating, to ask for your forgiveness, taking advantage of your goodness and despising your graces and prodigies, they lay hands on You, they bind You with ropes and chains, they grip You, they cast You to the ground, they trample upon You, they tear your hair. And You, with unheard-of patience, remain silent, suffering and repairing for the offenses of those who, in spite of miracles, do not surrender to your Grace, and become more obstinate.

With those ropes and chains, You impetrate from the Father the grace to snap the chains of our sins, and You bind us with the sweet chain of love. And, lovingly, You correct Peter, who wants to defend You to the point of cutting off the ear of Malchus. With this, You intend to repair for the good works, which are not done with holy prudence, or which fall into sin because of excessive zeal.

My most patient Jesus, it seems that these ropes and chains give something more beautiful to your Divine Person: your forehead becomes more majestic, so much so, as to draw the attention of your enemies themselves; your eyes blaze with more light; your Divine Face assumes a supreme peace and sweetness, such as to enamor your very executioners. With your sweet and penetrating accents, though few, You make them tremble; so much so, that if they dare to offend You, it is because You Yourself allow them to do so.

Oh chained and bound Love, can You ever allow Yourself to be bound for me, making a greater display of your love toward me, while I, your little child, remain without chains? No, no; rather, with your most holy hands, bind me with your own ropes and chains.

Therefore I pray You, as I kiss your divine forehead, to bind all of my thoughts, my eyes, my ears, my tongue, my heart, my affections, and all of me; and together with me, bind all creatures, so that, in feeling the sweetnesses of your loving chains, they may never again dare to offend You.

My sweet Good, it is now one o'clock. My mind begins to doze off. I will do the best I can in order to stay awake; but if sleep surprises me, I leave myself inside of You, in order to follow whatever You do; even more, You Yourself will do it for me. In You I leave my thoughts, to defend You from your enemies; my breathing, as cortege and company; my heartbeat, to tell You, constantly, that I love You and to make up for the love which others do not give You; the drops of my blood, to repair You and to render back to You the honor and the esteem which they will take away from You with insults, spit and slaps. My Jesus, bless me and let me sleep in your adorable Heart; and from your heartbeats, accelerated by love or by sorrow, I will be able to wake up often, so as not to interrupt our company. Let us make this agreement, O Jesus!

Reflections and Practices

Jesus promptly gave Himself into the hands of the enemies, seeing the Will of the Father in His enemies.

In the deceptions, in the betrayals of creatures, are we ready to forgive as Jesus forgave? Do we take from the hands of God all the evil that we receive from creatures? Are we ready to do all that Jesus wants from us? In the crosses, in the strains, can we say that our patience imitates that of Jesus?

+ My chained Jesus, may your chains bind my heart and keep it still, to make it ready to suffer everything You want.