

THE TRIAL - ROLE PLAY FOR HOLY WEEK

Dialogue loosely based on the Gospel accounts of the trial contained in
Matthew 27, Mark 15, Luke 23 and John 18

CAIAPHAS:

Behold the man, shamed as he is. A weak man, now that his friends have fled. A man wronged by his own companions.

PILATE:

What is his crime ? Why do you bring him to me?

PILATE:

We ask for justice, nothing more. We have no power to condemn a man to death. His crime is insurrection - encouraging a riot, offending our own religious principles. His crime is worthy of death.

PILATE:

(to Jesus) How do you answer these accusations ? Have you anything to say?

JESUS:

I have always been open. I have nothing to hide.

CAIAPHAS:

He has set himself up as king. Less than a week ago, he rode in triumph through the city gates. He calls himself the King of the Jews.

PILATE:

How do you answer these accusations ? Are you the King of the Jews?

JESUS:

Those are your words - not mine.

PILATE:

(to Caiaphas) The accusations you bring against him appear unfounded. I cannot find him guilty

CAIAPHAS:

According to our Law, he is guilty. Our people must be protected. It is better for one man to die rather than have an entire nation suffer.

PILATE:

If it will satisfy you, I will have him whipped. But I can find no crime that deserves death.

CAIAPHAS:

To flog him is not enough. To call himself 'king' is to oppose Caesar. Will you support a man who sets himself up against the Emperor of Rome?

PILATE:

(anxious, to Jesus) Don't you hear what is being said against you, Jesus ? You stand on the threshold of death. Your fate is in my hands. Have you still nothing to say ?
(Pause. Jesus stays silent) Are you a king?

JESUS:

You say I am. But my kingdom does not belong to this world. If it did, my followers would have protected me. I was born for one purpose: to witness to the truth. Listen to truth.

PILATE:

And what is truth?

CAIAPHAS:

Time is advancing, Pilate. The morning is already half over. We need Jesus condemned and executed before nightfall. Our sacred feast follows.

PILATE:

And I shall observe the custom of your feast and release a prisoner for you. Whom will you have? Barabbas the murderer? Or Jesus, called the King of the Jews?

CROWD:

Give us Barabbas. Jesus deserves death.

PILATE:

On what grounds ? He is already degraded, humiliated. He is no king, no conspirator against the state.

CROWD:

Crucify him!

PILATE:

(showing them Jesus) Behold the man!

CROWD:
Crucify him!

PILATE:
Take him yourselves.

CAIAPHAS:
We have no law to execute him. But by our law, he deserves to die since he calls himself the Son of God.

PILATE:
My conscience would not rest easy. I cannot justify his condemnation

CROWD:
Then the guilt will rest upon us. Let him be crucified.

PILATE:
Rather than Barabbas?

CROWD:
Release Barabbas.

PILATE:
And what of Jesus?

CROWD:
Crucify him! CRUCIFY HIM!

PILATE:
Lead him to Calvary.
Place a wooden cross upon him.
Strip him of his gown.
Nail him to his cross.
Proclaim him 'King of the Jews'.
And there, let him die, your Christ!