

The Golden Legend or Lives Of The Saints
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{Lacunae supplied in curly brackets are from William Granger Ryan's translation}

53// THE PASSION OF OUR LORD

The passion of our Lord was bitter for the sorrow that he suffered in derisions despitous and of many filths fructuous. The sorrow was cause [because] of five things.

THE FIVE CAUSES OF OUR LORD'S SORROW

The Shamefulness of the Crucifixion

The first, because it was shameful, for the place of the Mount of Calvary, whereas malefactors and criminal persons were put to execution, and he was there put to death right foul. The cross was the torment of thieves, and if the cross was then of shame and of villainy, she is now of glory and of honour.

Wherefore saith St. Austin: *Crux latronum qui erat supplicium, etc.* The cross which was the justice of thieves is now become the sign of glory in the foreheads or fronts of emperors. And if he had such honour at his torment, what did he to his servant for the shameful fellowships that he did to him?

For he was set with malefactors, but the one of them was converted, which was called Dismas, like as it said in the *Gospel of Nicodemus*. And he was on the right side of our Lord, and that other on the left side was damned, which was called Gesmas. So that one then he gave the realm of heaven, and to that other hell.

Whereof saith St. Ambrose: *Auctor pietatis in cruce, etc.* He saith the author of pity hanging on the cross divided offices of pity in secular errands; that is to say, the persecution to the apostles, peace to his disciples, his body to the Jews, his spirit to the Father, to the Virgin the messages of the wedding of the sovereign spouse, to the thief paradise, to sinners hell, and to [the]Christian penitent he commanded the cross. Lo! this is the testament that Jesu Christ made hanging on the cross.

The Injustice of The Crucifixion

Secondly, the sorrow was caused unjustly, for none iniquity was found in him. And principally, unjustly they accused him of three things. The first was they said that he defended to pay the trewage [tribute]; and for he said that he was a king; and he said him to be the Son of God.

And against these three accusations we say on the Good Friday three excusations in the person of Jesu Christ when we sing: *Popule meus*, where Jesu Christ reproved them of three benefits that he did and gave to them, that is to wit the deliverance of them from Egypt, the sustentation and governance in the desert, and the plantation of the vine in a land propice. Like

as Jesu Christ would say: Thou accuses me because that I defend to pay thy trewage, and thou oughtest more to thank me of that I have delivered thee from the trewage and from the servitude of Pharaoh and of Egypt; thou accusest me that I call myself King, and thou oughtest better to yield me thankings of that which I governed thee in the desert with meat royal; thou accusest me of this that I say me to be the Son of God, and thou oughtest more to thank me that I have chosen thee to be in my vineyard, and in a right good place I have planted thee.

Being Forsaken by His Friends

The third cause is because he was despised and forsaken of his friends, which seemed a thing more tolerable to be suffered of his enemies than of them whom he held to be his friends. And alway he suffered death for his friends and neighbours, that is of them of whose lineage he was born. This said he by the mouth of David: *Amici mei et proximi, etc.*: My friends and my neighbours have approached against me and so have continued. Whereof said Job, *capitulum xix* [chapter 9], *Noti mei quasi alieni recesserunt a me*: My neighbours that knew me, as strangers have left me. Item, he suffered of them to whom he had done much good. Like as St. John recordeth, *Johannis viii*: I have wrought many good things to you. And hereto saith St. Bernard: O good Jesus, how sweetly hast thou conversed with men, and how great things in the most abundant wise hast thou granted to them. How hard and sharp things hast thou suffered for them, hard words, harder strokes and beatings, and most hard torments of the cross, nevertheless they render and yield to thee contrary.

The Tenderness of His Body

The fourth cause is for the tenderness of his body. Whereof David saith in figure of him in the second book of Kings: He is like as that most tender worm of the wood.

Whereof saith St. Bernard: O ye Jews, ye be stones, but ye smite a better stone, whereof resoundeth the sound of pity and boileth the oil of charity.

And St. Jerome saith: He is delivered to knights for to be beaten, and their beatings have cruelly wounded and torn the most precious body, in whose breast the Godhead was hid.

The Pain to All His Body

The fifth cause was because it was general, for it was over all, that is to say over all his body, and in all the natural wits of his body.

His Eyes And first the sorrow was in his eyes, for he wept tenderly as St. Paul saith in his Epistle *ad Hebreos*. Twice he ascended on high that he might be far heard. He cried strongly because none should be excused. He added thereto weeping that we should have compassion, and to tender our hearts, and he had wept tofore two times also. One time when he raised Lazarus, and that other time when he approached Jerusalem he wept. The first tears were of love, whereof is said in the Gospel: Behold how he loved him! The second were of compassion upon Jerusalem. But in this third weeping the tears were of sorrow.

His Ears Secondly, the sorrow was in hearing with his ears the reproofs and villanies that was said to him and blasphemed. Jesu Christ in especial had four things in which he heard blasphemy and reproofs, for he had right excellent noblesse. As to the nature divine, he was son of the King, perpetual sovereign, and as to the nature human he was born of the lineage royal. And as to this he was also King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He was also sovereign truth. For he is the way, the life, and the truth. Whereof he said himself: Thy word is truth. The Son of God, that is the word of God the Father, he hath also sovereign power above all other. For none may surmount him, for all things been made by him and nought is made without him. He hath also singular bounty, for there is none good of himself but God only.

And in these four things here, Jesu Christ had opprobriums and blasphemies. First as to his noblesse, {they asked, “Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not his mother called Mary?” His power was derided: “It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons” and “He saved others, he cannot save himself.” They said he was powerless though he showed power enough to strike down his persecutors solely by the sound of his voice. When he asked: “Whom do you seek?” and they said: “Jesus of Nazareth,” Jesus answered: “I told you that I am he,” and they fell to the ground at once. Augustine: “He struck at this hate-ridden, fearfully armed mob with no weapon but a word; he repulsed them, laid them low by the power of his hidden divinity. What will he, who did this when about to be judged, do when he comes to judge? What will eh who was about to die be able to do when he assumes his reign?”}

{His truth was denied: “You are bearing witness to yourself; your testimony is not true.” So they called him a liar, whereas he was the way, the truth, and the life. Pilate did not deserve to know or hear this truth, because he was not judging Christ according to the truth. He did begin his judging on the basis of truth, but he did not abide by the truth; therefore he was worthy to raise the question about truth, but not to hear the solution.} St. Austin saith that he abode not the solution, because that so soon as he had made the question it came in his thought that the custom was of the Jews that one should be delivered to them at Paske. And therefore he went out anon and abode not the solution. The third cause is after St. John Chrysostom: For the question was [of] so great difficulty, that he had need of long time to advise and to discuss it. And he laboured for the deliverance of Jesu Christ, and therefore he issued out anon. Nevertheless it is read in the *Gospel of Nicodemus* that Jesu Christ answered: *Veritas de celo* est. And Pilate said: “In earth is no truth?” And Jesus said to him: “How may be truth in earth which in earth is judged of them that have power in earth?”

Fourthly, he suffered blasphemy as to his bounty and goodness. For they said that he was a man sinner and deceiver in his words, Luke xxiii: He hath moved the common people with his doctrine, in beginning from Galilee, hither, and hath broken the commandments of the law, for he keepeth not the Sabbath day, *Johannis nono*.

His Sense of Smell Thirdly, the sorrow was in smelling of ordure and filth. For he might smell great stench on the Mount of Calvary whereas were the bodies of dead men stinking, whereof is said in *Scholastica Historia* that Calvary is the bone of the head all bare. And because that many were there beheaded, and many skulls of heads were there sparteled [strewn about] all openly, they said that it was the place of Calvary.

His Sense of Taste Fourthly the sorrow in tasting, whereof he cried: *Sitio!* I am athirst! There was given to him vinegar meddled with myrrh and gall, to the end that he should the sooner die, and the keepers might the sooner depart and go thence. For it is said by vinegar men die much soone. And with this also they gave to him myrrh for to have the more pain, for the bitterness of the myrrh and of the gall. Whereof saith St. Austin: His purity was fulfilled with vinegar instead of wine, his sweetness with gall; the innocent is set for guilty, and the life dieth for death.

His Sense of Touch Fifthly, the sorrow was in touching, for in all the parts of his body he was touched and wounded, from the plant of his foot unto the top of his head was none whole place.

And how he suffered sorrow in all his natural wits St. Bernard telleth, that saith: The head that made angels to tremble is pierced and pricked with the quality of sharp thorns. The visage which was most fair of all other members is fouled by spit, and hurt with the thorns of the Jews. The eyes more shining than the sun be extinct in the death. The ears hear not the song of the angels but the assaults of the sinners. The mouth that teacheth and enseigneth the angels, is made drink vinegar and gall. The feet, of whom the steps be worshipped, be attached with nails to the cross. The hands that formed the heavens be stretched on the cross, and nailed with nails. The body is beaten, the side is pierced with a spear, and what more may be said? There abode nothing save the tongue for to pray for the sinners, and for to recommend his mother to his disciple.

THE MOCKERIES THAT JESUS SUFFERED

Secondly, his passion was despised of mockeries and derisions of the Jews. For four times he was mocked.

At the House of Ananias

First, at the house of Ananias where he received spittings, buffets and blindfolding, of the Jews. Whereof St. Bernard saith: Right sweet and good Jesus thy desirous visage which angels desire to see, the Jews with their spittings have defiled, with their hands have smitten, with a veil forntorn they have covered, nor they have not spared to hurt it with bitter wounds.

In the House of Herod

Secondly, he was mocked in the house of Herod, which reputed him for a fool, and aliened from his wit, because he might have of him none answer. And by derision he was clad with a white vesture.

Whereof saith St. Bernard: *Tu es homo, etc.* – He saith thus: Thou art a man and hast a chaplet of flowers, and I am God and have a chaplet of thorns. Thou hast gloves on thine hands, and I have the nails fixed in my hands. Thou dancest in white vestures, and I God am mocked and vilipended [despised], and in the house of Herod had received a white vesture. Thou dancest and playest with thy feet, and I with my feet have laboured in great pain. Thou liftest up thine arms in joy, and I have stretched them in great reproof. Thou stretchest out thine arms across in caroling and gladness, and I stretch mine in the cross in great opprobrium and villainy. Thou hast

thy side and thy breast open in sign of vain glory, and I have mine opened with a spear. Nevertheless return to me and I shall receive thee.

But why and wherefore Jesus in the time of his passion before Herod Pilate and the Jews was thus still and spake not, there be three reasons and causes. The first was because they were not worthy to hear his answer. The second was because Eve sinned by speaking, and Jesus would make satisfaction by being still and not speaking. The third is because that all that ever he answered, they perverted it.

In the House of Pilate

Thirdly, Jesus was mocked in the house of Pilate. For they clad him with a red mantle, and in his hand they took him a reed, and set upon his head a crown of thorns, and kneeled on their knees before him saying: Hail, King of the Jews. This crown was of jonkes of the sea [furze]. And we hold and say that the blood sprang out of his head. Whereof saith St. Bernard: *Caput illud divinum, etc.* The head precious and divine was pierced with thorns unto the brain of the soul.

There be three opinions in what place principally the soul hath her place; or in the heart, for the scripture saith, out of the heart come the evil thoughts; or in the blood, because the scripture saith, the soul of every one is in the blood; or in the head, because the Evangelist saith: When he inclineth his head he rendered his spirit. And this treble opinion it seemeth that the Jews had known, for when they would make the soul issue out of the body, they sought it in the head, when they thrust the thorns to the brain. They sought it in the blood when they opened his veins in the feet and hands. And they sought it in the heart when they pierced his side.

Against these three illusions, on Good Friday, before the cross is showed, we make three adorations in saying: *Agios, O Theos, Yskyros, etc.*, in honouring him three times, like as he was for us mocked and scorned on the cross.

On the Cross

Fourthly, he was scorned on the cross. The princes of the priests with the old men and masters of the law, clerks and doctors, said to him: If he be King of Israel, let him descend from the cross now to the end that we believe in him. Whereof saith St. Bernard: In that Jesus showed the more great virtue of patience, he commanded humility, he accomplished obedience, he performed charity. And in sign of these four virtues the four corners of the cross be adorned with precious gems and stones. And in the most apparent place is charity, and on the right side is obedience, and on the left side is patience, and beneath is humility, the root of all virtues.

And all these things that Jesu Christ suffered, St. Bernard gathereth together saying: I shall, said he, as long as I shall live remember the labours that he had in preaching, of the travails that he had in going from one place to another by land, and from city to city, of his wakings in praying, of his temptations in fasting, of his weepings and tears in having compassion, of the awaitings on him in speaking, in assaying him and tempting. And at last of the villanies of the spittings, of the mockeries, of the opprobriums and of the nails.

THE GOOD EFFECTS OF HIS PASSION

Thirdly, his passion was profitable and fructuous: the which may be profitable in three manners. That is to wit in remission of sin, in gifts of grace, and in demonstration of glory. And these three things be showed in the title of the cross. The first is Jesus, the second Nazareus, and the third Rex Judeorum, for there shall we all be kings.

Of the profit speaketh St. Austin, saying: Our Lord Jesu Christ hath put away the sins past, present, and to come. The sins past in pardoning them; the present in withdrawing men from them; them to come in giving grace to eschew the sins. Yet the same doctor saith thus: We ought to praise and to thank, to love and to honour him; for by the death of our Saviour and Redeemer we be brought to life, from corruption to incorruption, from exile unto our country, from weeping to joy we be called again.

And how well the manner of our redemption was profitable it appeareth by five reasons. That is to wit, because it was right acceptable to appease God, right helping to save us, right effectual to draw to him the human lineage, right wise to fight against the enemy of human lineage, and to reconcile us to God.

It Was Right Acceptable to Appease God

For after this that St. Anselm saith: There is nothing more sharp ne more strong that a man may suffer by his proper will, without it be of God, than to suffer death with his own proper will for the honour of God. Ne no man may better give to God to his honour than give himself to death for him.

And this is that the apostle saith *ad Ephesios* v Our Lord hath given himself in to oblation and sacrifice for us in to the odour of sweetness to God the Father.

And how he was sacrificed that was in us appeasing God, St. Austin in the book of the Trinity saith thus: What thing may be more graciously and pleasantly received than the flesh of our sacrifice, which was made the precious body of our priest. Therefore four things ought to be considered in all sacrifice: First, him to whom it is offered, that which is offered, him that offereth, and him for who the offering is offered. He himself is the moyen of both two; or that is to say God and man, he was himself that did offer, and he was himself that was offered. And the same doctor saith yet of this sacrifice, how we be to God reconciled: Jesu Christ is the priest and the sacrifice, he is God and also he is the temple, he is the priest by whom we be reconciled, God, to whom we be reconciled, and the temple in whom we be reconciled, the sacrifice of whom we be reconciled.

And St. Austin saith, considering them that despise this reconciliation, and set nought thereby, he saith in the person of Jesu Christ in reproving them: When thou wert enemy to my Father I have reconciled thee; when thou wert far I bought thee again; when thou wert taken I came for to redeem thee; when among the mountains and the forests thou wert out of the way, I sought thee, to the end that of the wolves nor of the evil beasts thou wert not eaten nor all torn; I gathered thee and bare thee in mine arms and delivered thee to my Father. I laboured, I

sweat, I put mine head against the thorns, stretched mine hands unto the nails, opened my side to the spear, have shed my blood, and have given over my soul and life for to join thee to me, and thou hast departed thyself from me.

It Was Right Helping to Save Us

Secondly, Jesu Christ was right convenable and necessary for to save us, and to heal and cure us of our malady and sickness, for because of the time and of the place and of the manner of the time, as it appeareth.

For Adam was made and sinned in the month of March, and on the Friday, which is the sixth day of the week, and therefore God in the month of March, and on the Friday would suffer death, and at midday which is the sixth hour.

Secondly, for the place of his passion, the which might be considered in three manners. For one place either it is common or especial or singular. The place common where he suffered was the land of promise; the place especial, the mount of Calvary; The place singular, the cross. In the {common place the first man was formed, because it is said that he was formed} in a field about or nigh Damascus. Where it is said, in a place special, he was there buried. For right in the place where Jesu Christ suffered death, it is said that Adam was buried. (How well that this is not authentic, for St. Jerome saith that Adam was buried in Hebron. And also in the book of Josuah is written the xiv chapter. In a place singular he was deceived, that is to wit in the tree, not in this on which Jesus suffered death, but in another tree.)

Thirdly, he was right convenable because of the curing, the which by manner was semblable to the prevarication by like and contrary. For thus as saith St. Austin in the book, *De doctrina christiana*: By a woman he was deceived, and by a woman he was born a man, and the man delivered the men. One mortal delivered the mortal, and the death by his death. And St. Ambrose saith: Adam was of the earth a virgin; Jesu Christ was born of the virgin; Adam was made to the image of God; Jesus was the image of God; by a woman folly was showed; by a woman wisdom was born. Adam was naked; Jesu Christ naked. The death came by the tree, the life by the cross. Adam in desert, and Jesus in desert, but by the contrary.

For after St. Gregory: Adam sinned by pride, by disobedience and by gluttony, for he coveted the highness of God. For the serpent said to them, ye shall be semblable to God, he brake the covenant of God, and desired and coveted the sweetness of the fruit by gluttony. And because the manner of the Saviour ought to be by the contrary, therefore this manner was right convenable by the humiliation, by the fulfilling and affliction, or of the divine volenty. And hereof saith the apostle ad Philipenses; *Humiliavit se ipsum*.

It Was Right Effectual to Draw to Him the Human Lineage

Thirdly, Jesus was right profitable to draw to him the human lineage. For one of the world, his free will saved, might never have drawn mankind to his love.

And how he draweth us to his love St. Bernard saith:

Above all things O good Jesu give me grace to love thee. And by this thing he drew us most to his love. That is the chalice good Lord that thou hast drunken, which was the work our of redemption. This chalice is thy passion, which lightly may appropre our love to thee. This is that draweth most pleasantly our devotion, and justly raiseth it, and soonest straineth and most vehemently taketh our affection. And where thou lamentest, and thereas thou despoilest thee of thy rays natural, there shineth most thy pity; there is most clear thy charity, and there aboundeth most thy grace.

And how also we ought to return to the affiance of him St. Paul saith, ad Romanos *viii*: He spared not his own Son, but for us all he delivered him.

Therefore St. Bernard saith: “Who is he that is not ravished to hope of affiance which taketh none heed to the disposition of his body? He hath his head inclined to be kissed, the arms stretched to embrace us, his hands pierced to give to us, the side open to love us, the feet fixed with nails for to abide with us, and the body stretched all for to give to us.”

It Was Right Wise to Fight Against the Enemy of Human Lineage

Fourthly, he was right wise and well advised for to fight against the enemy of the human lineage. Job xxvi.: His wisdom hath smitten the proud man, and after, may ye not take the fiend with an hook? Jesu Christ hath hid the hook of his divinity under the meat of our humanity, and the fiend would take the meat of the flesh, and was taken with the hook of the Godhead.

Of this wise taking, saith St. Austin, “Our Redemption is come and the deceiver is vanquished. And what did our Redemptor? He laid out his bait to our deceiver and adversary; he hath set forth his cross; and within he hath set his meat, that is his blood.” For he would shed his blood not as a debtor, and therefore, he departed from the debtors. And this debt here the apostle calleth chirographe or obligation, the which Jesu Christ bare and attached it to the Cross.

Of which Saint Austin saith: Eve took of the fiend sin by borrowing by usury, and wrote an obligation. She laid it for pledge, and the usury is augmented, and grew unto all the remnant of the lineage. Then took Eve of the fiend sin, when against the commandment she consented to him. She wrote the obligation when she put her hand to the tree against the defence of God. She delivered pledge when she made Adam to consent to the sin, and thus the usury grew and augmented unto the remainder of all the lineage.

Against them that reck nothing of this redemption Saint Bernard saith in the person of Jesu Christ:

My people, saith Jesu, what might I have done for thee that I have not done to thee? What cause is there that ye serve sooner the devil, our adversary, than me? For he hath not created ne hath nourished you. But this seemeth a little thing to them that be full of ingratitude. I have redeemed you and not he, and for what price? Not with gold ne silver, ne of the sun, ne of the moon, ne with any of the angels, but with my proper blood. And after consider, if of right for so many

benefits ye ought to choose to have my company. And if ye will all leave me, at the least come with me for to win a penny a day.

HOW JUDAS, THE JEWS, AND PILATE WERE PUNISHED

And because they delivered Jesu Christ to death, that is to wit Judas for avarice, the Jews for envy, and Pilate for dread. And therefore it is to see what pain was delivered to them of God for this sin.

But of the pain and of the birth of Judas thou shalt find in the legend of St. Matthew, of the pain and ruin of the Jews, in the legend of St. James the Less, and of the pain of Pilate and his birth thou shalt find in one apocryphum whereas it is said in this manner:

There was a king called Tyrus which knew carnally a maid called Pilam, which was daughter of a miller named Atus. And of this daughter he engendered a son. She took her name and the name of her father, which was called Atus, and composed thus of their names one name to her son, and named him Pilatus. And when he was three years old she sent him to the king. And the king had a son of the queen, which seemed to be of the age of Pilate. And these two sons when they were of age of discretion, oft they fought together, and with the sling they played oft. And the king's son also, which was legitimate, was more noble, and in all feats he knew more, and more was set by because of his birth.

And Pilate seeing this was moved of envy and wrath and privily slew his brother. The which thing the king heard say, and was much angry, and demanded of his council what he might do and make of this trespass and homicide. The which all with one voice said that he was worthy to suffer death. And the king would not double the pain and punishment, but because he owed to the Romans yearly a tribute, he sent him in hostage to the Romans, as well for to be quit of the death of his son, and that he should not be constrained to put him to death, as well as for to be quit of the tribute that he owed to Rome.

And this time was at Rome one of the sons of the king of France, which was also sent for trewage. And when Pilate saw him, he anon accompanied with him, and saw that he was praised before him for the wit and for the manners that were in him. Pilate slew him also.

And when the Romans demanded what should be done in this matter, they answered that he which had slain his brother and estranged him that was in hostage, if he might live should be yet much profitable to the common weal, and should daunt the necks of them that were cruel and wood [mad]. And then said the Romans, that sith he was worthy to die he should be sent into an isle of the sea named Ponthus, to them that will suffer no judge over them, to the end that his wickedness may overcome and judge them or else that he suffer of them like as he hath deserved.

Then was Pilate sent to this cruel people and wild, which before had slain their judge. And it was told to him to what people he was sent, and that he should consider how his life was hanging, and in great jeopardy. He went considering his life and thought to keep it, and did so much that by menaces and promises to torment as by gifts, that he subdued them all and put them in subjection. And because he had victory of this cruel people, he was named of this Isle of Pontus, Pontius Pilate.

And when Herod heard his iniquities and his frauds he had great joy thereof. And because he was wicked himself, he would have wicked with him, and sent for him by messengers and by promise of gifts that he came to him, and gave him the power upon the realm of Judæa and Jerusalem.

And when he had assembled and gathered together much money, he went to Rome without knowing of Herod, and offered right great sums of money to the Emperor for to get to himself that which Herod so held. And so he got it. And for this cause Herod and Pilate were enemies unto the time of the passion of Jesu Christ, whom Pilate sent to Herod.

Another cause of enmity is assigned in *Scholastica Historia*: There was one that said himself to be God, and had deceived many of Galilee, and brought the people into Garizim where he said that he would go up to heaven. And Pilate came upon them, and when he had knowledge of the deed he slew him and all his people, because he doubted that he would have deceived them of Judæa. And therefore were they enemies together, for Herod reigned in Galilee.

And when Pilate had delivered Jesu Christ to the Jews for to be crucified he doubted [feared] the Emperor that he should be reproved of that which he had judged an innocent, and sent a friend of his for to excuse him. And in this while Tiberius the Emperor fell into a grievous malady. And it was told to him that there was one in Jerusalem that cured all manner maladies. And he knew not that Pilate and the Jews had slain him. He said to Volusian, which was secret with him: Go into the parts over sea, and say to Pilate that he send to me the leech or master in medicine for to heal me of my malady.

And when he was come to Pilate and had said his message, Pilate was much abashed, and demanded fourteen days of dilation, in which time Volusian found an old woman named Veronica which had been familiar and devout with Jesu Christ. He demanded of her where he might find him that he sought. She then escried and said: alas! Lord God, my Lord, my God was he that ye ask for, whom Pilate damned to death, and whom the Jews delivered to Pilate for envy, and commanded that he should be crucified.

Then he complained him sorrowfully, and said: I am sorry because he may not accomplish that which my lord the Emperor hath charged me.

To whom Veronica said: My lord and my master when he went preaching, I absented me oft from him, I did do paint his image, for to have alway with me his presence, because that the figure of his image should give me some solace. And thus as I bare a linen kerchief in my bosom, our Lord met me, and demanded whither I went, and when I told him whither I went and the cause, he demanded my kerchief, and anon he emprinted his face and figured it therein. And if my lord had beholden the figure of Jesu Christ devoutly he should be anon guerished and healed.

And Volusian asked: Is there neither gold ne silver that this figure may be bought with? She answered: Nay, but strong of courage, devout and of great affection, I shall go with thee and shall bear it to the Emperor for to see it, and after I shall return hither again.

Then went Volusian with Veronica to Rome and said to the Emperor: Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou hast long desired, Pilate and the Jews by envy and with wrong, have put to death, and have hanged him on the cross. And a matron, a widow, is come with me which bringeth the image of Jesus, the which if thou with good heart and devoutly wilt behold, and have therein contemplation, thou shalt anon be whole.

And when the Emperor had heard this, he did anon make ready the way with cloths of silk, and made the image of Jesus to be brought before him. And anon as he had seen it and worshipped it he was all guerished and whole. Then he commanded that Pilate should be taken and brought to Rome.

And when the Emperor heard that Pilate was come to Rome, he was much wroth, and inflamed against him, and bade that he should be brought tofore him. Pilate ware always the garment of our Lord which was without seam, wherewith he was clad when he came before the Emperor. And as soon as the Emperor saw him all his wrath was gone, and the ire out of his heart; he could not say an evil word to him. And in his absence he was sore cruel towards him, and in his presence he was always sweet, and debonair to him, and gave him licence and departed. And anon as he was departed he was as angry and as sore moved as he was before, and more because he had not showed to him his fury. Then he made him to be called again, and sware he should be dead. And anon as he saw him his cruelty was all gone, whereof was great marvel.

Now was there one by the inspiration of God, or at the persuasion of some Christian man, caused the Emperor to despoil him of that coat. And anon as he had put it off, the Emperor had in his heart as great ire and fury as he had before, wherefore the Emperor marvelled of this coat, and it was told to him that it was the coat of Jesus.

Then the Emperor made Pilate to be set in prison till he had counselled what he should do with him. And sentence was given that he should die a villain's

death. And when Pilate heard the sentence, he took a knife and slew himself. And when the Emperor heard how he was dead, he said: Certainly he is dead of a right villainous death and foul, for his own proper hand hath not spared him.

Then his body was taken and bounden to a millstone and cast in the river of Tiber for to be sunken in to the bottom. And the ill spirits in the air began to move great tempests and marvellous waves in the water, and horrible thunder and lightning whereof the people was sore afraid and in great doubt. And therefore the Romans drew out the body and in derision sent it to Vienne and cast it in to the river named Rhone. Vienne is as much to say as hell, which is said Gehenna, for then it was a cursed place, and so there is his body in the place of malediction. And the evil spirits be as well there as in other places, and made such tempests as they did before, insomuch that they of that place might not suffer it.

And therefore they took the vessel wherein the body was, and sent it for to bury it in the territory of the city of Lausanne. The which also was tempested as the other. And it was taken thence and thrown into a deep pit all environed with mountains. In which place, after the relation of some, be seen illusions, and machinations of fiends be seen grow and boil.

And hitherto is this story called apocryphum read. They that have read this, let them say and believe as it shall please them.

Nevertheless in *Scholastica Historia* is read that Pilate was accused before the Emperor Tiberius because he did put to death by violence them that were innocent, by his might; and that maugre [in spite of] the Jews he did images of paynims [pagans] in the Temple, and that the money put *in corbanam* he took, and did withal his profit, and was proved in his visage that he made in his house alleys and conduits for water to run in. And for these things he was sent to Lyons in exile for to die among the people of whom he was born.

And this may be well supposed that this history be true. For tofore was the edict given that he should be put in exile to Lyons, and that he was exiled ere Volusian returned to the Emperor. But when the Emperor heard how he had made our Lord Jesu to die he made him from his exile to come to Rome. Eusebius and Bede in their chronicles say not that he was imprisoned and put in exile, but because that he fell in many miseries by despair he slew himself with his own hand.

The [iconography of the Passion](#) is available at the [Christian iconography website](#).

For other saints, see the [index to this Golden Legend website](#).

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