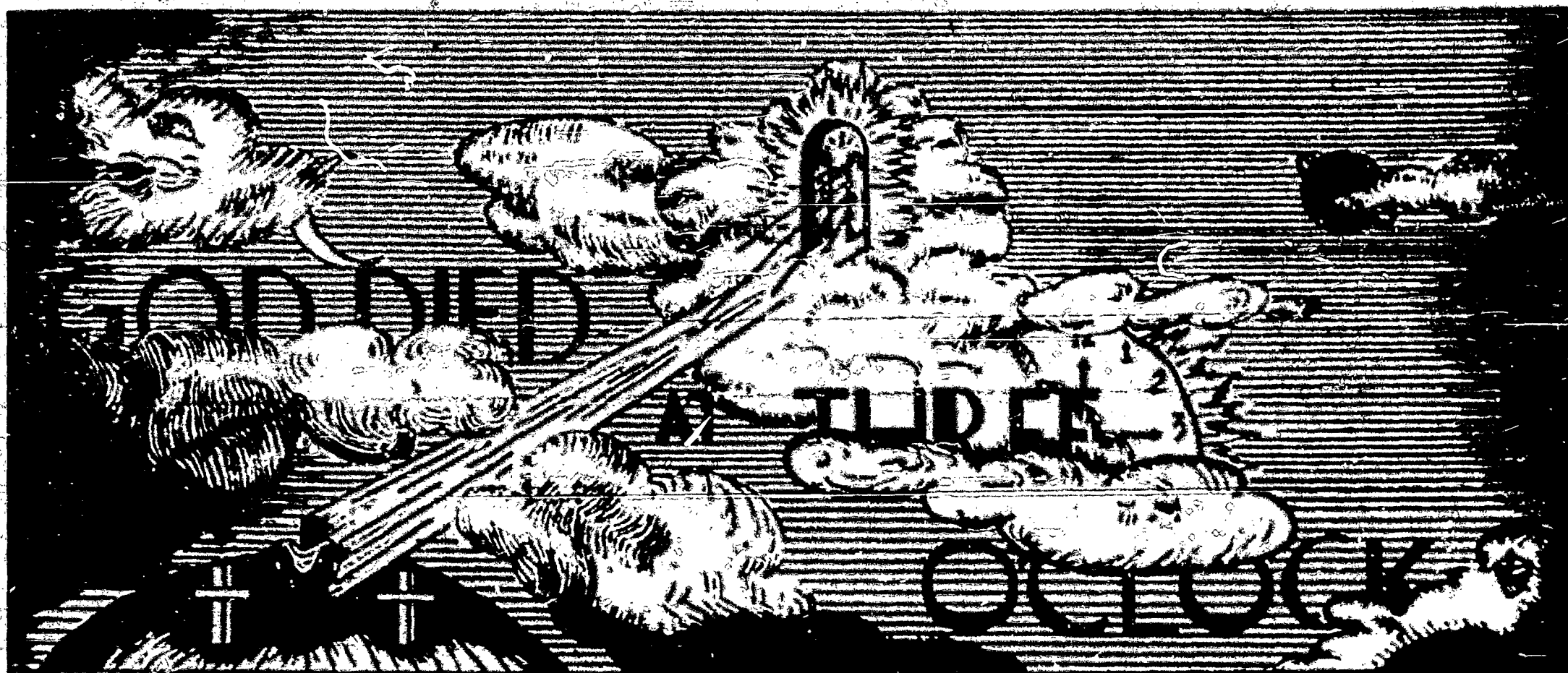


The Courier Journal

Youth Section



THE STORY UP TO NOW

At a Thursday evening supper with His Twelve Apostles in the city of Jerusalem, Christ surprises all by telling that there is a traitor among them. "One of you shall betray Me!" Christ does not tell the Traitor's name and Judas who is the Traitor leaves the supper room. When Judas departs, Christ warns the other Apostles of danger and afterwards leads them from the supper room to the Garden of Olives outside the City. With three Apostles—Peter, James and John—Christ enters the Garden to pray. Tired and weary, the three Apostles fall asleep but a great sorrow comes upon their Master. Finally they awake to hear Christ say, "He that will betray Me is here!" Lights and noises tell that a crowd is coming towards the Garden.

By the Reverend Gerald T. Brennan

III—The Kiss

Time stands still in the Garden of Olives as Jesus and His Apostles wait for the Traitor to appear. They see the torch lights grow brighter and they hear the sound of tramping feet grow louder. The Traitor is not coming alone. He brings with him a band of followers.

Jesus moves closer to the entrance of the Garden. Peter feels the sword hidden beneath his cloak. He grips it tightly and draws nearer to the Master.

The noisy mob bursts into the Garden. Soldiers! Servants of the High Priest! Men from the streets! Some carry lanterns and torches. Others wave swords, and sticks and clubs. Now they stop dead before Christ and His Apostles, they stare silently as if they are surprised to find anybody here at this hour. But why do they come? Who sends them?

Jesus steps forward to speak the first word. His voice is calm and firm. "Whom do you seek?" He asks.

"Jesus of Nazareth!" call out the men. The lights play on their hot faces and their eyes seem evil.

But Jesus answers quickly. "I am He."

At these words the wild-eyed mob staggers and falls back as if struck by a mighty blow. Slowly the mob draws together again. As boldness returns to these men a familiar figure suddenly steps forth from their midst. Peter's eyes flash. The smiling figure who now steps from the crowd toward the Master is Judas!

"Hail Master!" he says as he throws his arms around Christ and kisses Him.

This kiss is the kiss of a traitor. It is the traitor's signal to these men who seek Jesus with swords. They did not know Jesus by sight but now they are sure of Him. Jesus is the one whom Judas has greeted with a kiss!

Men Are Mistaken Immediately there is an uproar. The men crowd around Christ. They seize Him quickly, feeling He will try to escape. But they are mistaken. Jesus does not try to escape. He does not try to run away. He stands silently and faces His enemies with courage.

As these angry men press around Jesus, Peter racks his brain for some plan to save Him. If Peter attacks this mob alone he will be quickly overpowered and perhaps killed! But he might be able to inspire these men, Peter thinks. Alone he might attack this mob and hold it back long enough to give Jesus a chance to see. This is a bold plan. It means

roughly, but Jesus does not complain.

They lead Jesus bound with ropes from the garden and head towards the City of Jerusalem. God is now the Prisoner of men!

IV—Peter Weeps

Jerusalem! The great city of the Jews! Here Christ has preached often and worked many miracles. Here in this same city only four days ago the people gave Christ a royal welcome and wanted to make Him their King. Things are different now as His captors lead Him bound through the quiet streets. The city is cold and dark on this Thursday night. Once more Jerusalem receives Jesus—this time, not in glory, but in shame.

At the home of Annas, the guards turn in and Jesus follows them. At one time Annas had been the High Priest and even yet he is a man of power among the Jews. He is no longer the High Priest but Caiaphas, his son-in-law, is, and together they have plotted the death of Jesus. Annas is hard and cruel, a man without mercy. He seems very pleased to see Christ standing as a prisoner before him.

"Tell me what you have taught!" Annas says roughly to Jesus.

"Why do you ask Me?" replies the Prisoner calmly. "Ask them whom I have taught. They know what I said."

Christ is still the Master. Right away He has scored against

the wicked old Annas, who is stung by the Prisoner's words. Annas knows what Christ means. Annas must prove that Christ has done wrong. He must bring forth witnesses. Has anybody seen Christ do anything wrong? Christ dares Annas to prove it. Christ is demanding a trial. Jesus is ready to face a trial but Annas is not ready. Annas is not the High Priest. He has no power to call the judges. He orders the guards to take the Prisoner to Caiaphas. As Annas walks away he knows that it will not be easy to condemn Jesus to death.

Christ does not expect any fairness in the house of Caiaphas. The High Priest is the chief judge in this trial where Christ's life is at stake. But the High Priest is also Christ's chief enemy. Caiaphas gave the order to arrest Jesus. Already Caiaphas has told the other judges that the Teacher of Nazareth must die.

Now the judges of Jerusalem are gathered in the palace of the High Priest and the trial of Christ begins. Caiaphas is in control. He is not a judge seeking the truth but a murderer seeking blood. He calls upon witnesses to tell what they know about Jesus and they all speak lies! Some say that Christ breaks the laws. Others say that He is the friend of sinners. Still others claim that He works for the devil. These men speak the lies of Annas and Caiaphas.

During this evil trial Jesus stands before Caiaphas and the

other judges with His head bowed. He is a sad figure and He says nothing. Even when they lie about Him, Jesus does not complain. It is useless to argue here. Jesus only listens and suffers in silence.

But the silence of Jesus worries Caiaphas and the lies worry the judges. Eager for the judges to condemn Christ to death, Caiaphas feels he must break the silence of the Prisoner.

Standing in his place the High Priest faces Jesus. "Have you nothing to say?" he asks and his voice is angry.

Jesus does not answer. His judges have failed to find anything wrong in Him and Jesus refuses to argue against lies.

The Prisoner's silence enrages the High Priest. "Tell us," he demands, "are you the Christ, the Son of God?"

This question breaks the silence of Jesus. "I am," He answers calmly.

Caiaphas pretends to be shocked at Christ's claim to be the Son of God. He turns to the other judges. Do they not believe that Christ has insulted God, he asks. Do they not believe that Christ must be put to death? The judges agree with Caiaphas. The Prisoner, they admit, is guilty of death!

Seeing the hatred of the judges for Christ, the guards now treat their Prisoner with cruelty. They blindfold Jesus and then strike Him with their hands. Others mock Him, make fun of Him, and even spit in His face.

Jesus can do nothing. He is not able to defend Himself. His hands are tied. He suffers the blows and insults of His guards without speaking a word.

The evil Caiaphas now plots his next step against Christ. The judges have condemned Jesus to death but Caiaphas cannot carry out this order without the consent of the Roman Governor Pilate. So, Caiaphas orders the guards to hold the Prisoner until morning when he will be brought before Pilate.

While Caiaphas has worked for the death of Christ a crowd has gathered in the servant's quarters of his place. Here servants and a few strangers warm themselves near a fire. Among them is one friend of Jesus. It is the Apostle Peter! Still hopeful that His Master may escape, Peter has slipped into this room to await the outcome.

But the servants recognize Peter as a friend of the Prisoner. First one accuses Him. Then another. Each time the fearful Peter denies that he knows Christ. Then, a third servant accuses Peter of being a follower of Christ. Angry, Peter declares that he does not know the Man.

At this moment, Peter looks up to see the sad face of Jesus looking at him. Peter has denied His Master. Like Judas, he too is a traitor, shocked by what he has done, Peter hurries from the House of Caiaphas.

Alone again, Peter begins to weep for having denied Jesus but through his tears, the sorry Apostle once more believes Jesus will forgive. Jesus will always love Peter!

(Continued next week)

Life of Little Flower Best Seller in Tokyo

Tokyo — (NC) — The demand for Catholic literature in Japan today and the universal appeal of a great modern saint are both indicated by the success of the new Japanese edition of the life of St. Therese, the Little Flower. The book, which has been translated into Japanese, is now being widely distributed in the Far East. It is a beautiful story of a young girl who lived a life of perfect love and sacrifice. The book is a masterpiece of spiritual literature and is a must-read for all who seek the path of holiness.

