

N-Town Plays #27-28

Translated and edited by Ryan Christofferson

Translator's Preface:

This document has been translated into modern English from the Middle English text found on metseditions.org. The translator's priority has been to stay as close to a word-for-word translation as possible, so there is very little change to the structure of the sentences. Most of the alterations come from updating the spelling of Middle English words to modern English. When a word-for-word translation would not make sense, a near translation alters the word and possibly a few words around it.

When faced with a choice between a translation that rhymed and one that did not, the rhyming translation was chosen. For example, *morwyn* could be translated as *morning* or *morn*, but the latter rhymes better.

Some Middle English words in the play are similar to those found in the King James Version of the Bible. Those were translated into their more common, present-day versions rather than King James English. For example, *Thu* is translated as *you* rather than *thou*. Punctuation was not changed from the Middle English text, even when it would be more grammatically correct.

The specific word "Maunde" traces back to the *mandatus* of the first antiphon sung at the washing of the feet on the Thursday before Easter, Maundy Thursday. Rather than changing it to the term "Passover meal," which was a Jewish ceremony contemporary with Jesus' time, the term *Maundy* has remained, despite being neither Jewish nor contemporary. There are multiple anachronisms in the plays, but historical accuracy does not seem to be the focus. At least, these inaccuracies were not enough of an issue to justify changing them.

All italicized portions have been translated as well, and were part of the original plays giving stage directions.

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27. Conspiracy, Entry into Jerusalem

Here Christ proceeds on foot with his disciples after him, Christ weeping upon the city, says:

JESUS: Oh, Jerusalem, woeful is the ordinance
Of the day of your great persecution!
You shall be destroyed with woeful grievance
And your royalty brought to true confusion.

You, that in the city have habitation,
They shall curse the time that they were born,
So great adversity and tribulation
Shall fall on them, both evening and morn.

They that have most children soonest shall wail
And say, "Alas! What may this mean?"
Both meat and drink suddenly shall fail;
The vengeance of God there shall be seen.

The time of coming its woe shall be,
The day of trouble and great grievance.
Both temples and towers, they shall fall down clean.
O city! Full woeful is your ordinance!

PETER: Lord, where will you keep your Maundy?¹
I pray you, now let us have knowing
That we may make ready for you,
You to serve without delaying.

JOHN: To provide, Lord, for your coming,
With all obedience, we can attend
And make ready for you in all things.
Into what place you will us send?

JESUS: Sirs, go to Zion, and you shall meet
A poor man in simple array
Bearing water in the street.
Tell him I shall come that way

Unto him meekly, look that you say
That to his house I will come to.
He will not once to you say nay,
But suffer to have all your will.

PETER: At your will, Lord, it shall be done.
To seek that place, we shall us hie.

JOHN: In all the haste that we may go,
Your commandment never to deny.

Here Peter and John go forth, meeting with Simon the Leper bearing a water can, Peter says:

PETER: Good man! The prophet, our Lord Jesus,
This night will rest within your hall.
One message to you he has sent us,
That for his supper, ordain you shall.

JOHN: Yes, for him and his disciples all —
Ordain for his Maundy
A paschal lamb whatever befall,
For he will keep his Passover with you.

SIMON: What? Will my Lord visit my place?
Blessed be the time of his coming!
I shall ordain within short space
For my good Lord's welcoming.

Sirs, walk in at the beginning
And see what victuals that I shall take.
I am so glad of these tidings;
I know never what joy that I may make!

Here the disciples go in with Simon to see the ordinance, and Christ comes in, and says:

JESUS: This path is chalcedony² by spiritual ordinance,
Which shall convey us where we shall be.
I know full ready is the purveyance
Of my friends that love me.

Continuing in peace, now proceed we,
For man's love, this way I take.
With ghostly eye, I verily see
That man, for man, an end must make.

Here the disciples come again to Christ, Peter says:

PETER: All ready, Lord, is our ordinance
As I hope to you pleasing shall be;
Simon has done at your behest.
He is full glad your presence to see.

JOHN: All things we have, Lord, at our pleasing

That belong to your Maundy with full glad cheer.
When he heard tell of your coming,
Great joy in him then did appear.

Here comes Simon out of his house to welcome Christ.

SIMON: Gracious Lord, welcome you be!
Reverence be to you, both God and man.
My poor house, that you will see,
Which am your servant, as I can.

JESUS: There, joy of all joys to you is sure.
Simon, I know your true intent.
The bliss of heaven, you shall secure —
This reward, I shall you grant at present.

Here Christ enters into the house with his disciples and eats the paschal lamb. And in the meantime, the council house shall suddenly appear, showing the bishops, priests, and judges sitting in their estate, like as it were a convocation, Annas says:

ANNAS: Behold, it is naught all that we do!
In all our matters, we profit naught.
Will you see what crowds of people draws him to
For the marvels that he has wrought!

Some other subtlety must be sought,
For in no wise we may not thus him leave.
Then, to a shrewd conclusion we shall be brought,
For the Romans then will us the mischief,

And take our estate and put us to reprove,
And convey all the people at their own request,
And thus, all the people in him shall believe!
Therefore, I pray you, cousin, say what is the best.

CAIAPHAS: Attend now, sirs, to that I shall say!
Unto us all, it is most expedient
That one man for the people should die
Than all the people should perish and be shent.³

Therefore, let us work wisely that we not repent.
We must needs put on him some false deed.
I say for me, I had rather he were burnt
Than he should us all thus overlead.

Therefore, every man for his part help at this need,

And counterfeit all the subtleties that you can.
Now let us see who can give best rede⁴
To ordain some destruction for this man.

GAMALIEL: Let us no longer make delay,
But do Jesus be taken in hands fast,
And all his followers to their confusion,
And into a prison do them be cast.

Lay on them iron that will last,
For he has wrought against the right.
And then, after, we shall in haste
Judge him to death with great despite.

REWFYN:⁵ For he has trespassed against our law!
Me seems this were best judgment:
With wild horses, let him be drawn,
And after, in fire he shall be burnt!

LEYON Sirs, one thing myself heard him say,
That he was King of Jews all!
That is enough to have him die,
For treason to Caesar, we must it call!

He said also to persons that I know,
That he should and might certain
The great temple mightily overthrow,
And the third day, raise it again!

Such matters, the people do constrain
To give credence to his works all.
In heaven, he says, shall be his reign —
Both God and man, he does him call.

REWFYN: And all this day, we should contrive
What shameful death Jesus should have.
We may not do him too much mischief,
The honor of our law to save.

LEYON: Upon a gibbet,⁶ let him hanged be;
This judgment, me seems, it is reason,
That all the country may him see
And beware by his great treason.

REWFYN: Yet one thing, sirs, you must spy
And make a right subtle ordinance

By what means you may come him by,
For he has many followers at his instance.

ANNAS: Sirs, thereof we must have advisement
And be accorded before we go.
How we shall have him at our intent,
Some way we shall find thereto.

MARY MAGDALENE: As a cursed creature closed all in care,
And as a wicked wretch all wrapped in woe,
Of bliss was never no girl so bare
As I, myself, that here now go.

Alas, alas, I shall be lost
For those great sins that I have done
Unless my Lord God somewhat spare
And his great mercy receive me to!

Mary Magdalene is my name.
Now will I go to Christ Jesus,
For he is lord of all virtue,
And for some grace, I think to sue.

For of myself, I have great shame.
Ah, mercy, Lord, and heal my sin!
Maiden's child, you wash me free.
There was never woman of man's kin

So full of sin in no country!
I have sinned by wood and fen,⁷
And sought sin in many a city,
Unless you save me, Lord, I shall burn

With black fiends, ever bound to be!
Wherefore, King of Grace,
With this ointment that is so sweet,
Let me anoint your holy feet.

And for my pains thus win some relief
And mercy, Lord, for my trespass.

JESUS: Woman, for your weeping will,
Some succor God shall you send.

You to save, I have great skill,
For sorrowful heart may sin amend.

All your prayer I shall fulfill;
To your good heart, I will attend

And save you from your sin so ill,
And from seven devils, I shall you defend.
Fiends, flee your way!
Wicked spirits, you I conjure:

Flee out of her bodily bower!
In my grace, she shall ever flower
Till death makes her to die.

MARY MAGDALENE: I thank you, Lord, of this great grace!

Now these seven fiends are from me flown!
I shall never forfeit nor do trespass
In word, nor deed, nor will, nor wit.
Now I am brought from the fiend's brace

In your great mercy, closed and shut.
I shall never return to sinful trace
That should damn me to hell pit.
I worship you on knees bare.

Blessed be the time that I hither sought,
And this ointment that I hither brought,
For now my heart is cleansed from thought
That first was cumbered with care.

JUDAS: Lord, me thinks you do right ill
To let this ointment so spill!
To sell it, it were more skill,
And buy meat to poor men.

The box was worth of good money —
Three hundred pence, fair and free!
This might have bought meat plenty
To feed our poor kin.

JESUS: Poor men shall abide.
Against the woman you speak wrong,
And I pass forth in a tide.
Of mercy is her mourning song.

Here Christ rests and eats a little and says, sitting to his disciples and Mary Magdalene:

JESUS: My heart is right sorry, and no wonder is.
To death I shall go and never did trespass.
But yet, most grieves my heart ever of this:
One of my brethren shall work this menace.

One of you here sitting, my treason shall plot;
One of you is busy, my death here to arrange.
And yet was I never in so sinful state
Wherefore my death should so shamefully be made.

PETER: My dear Lord, I pray you, the truth for to tell:
Which of us is he that treason shall do?
What traitor is he that his Lord would sell?
Express his name, Lord, that shall work this woe.

JOHN: If that there be one that would sell so,
Good master, tell us openly his name!
What traitor is him that from you would go,
And with false treason fulfill his great shame?

ANDREW: It is right dreadful, such treason to think
And well more dreadful to work that bad deed,
For that false treason to hell, he shall sink!
In endless pains, great mischief to lead.

JAMES MAJOR:⁸ It is not I, Lord, for doubt I have dread
This sin to fulfill came never in my mind!
If that I sold you, your blood for to bleed,
In doing that treason, my soul I should rend.

MATTHEW: Alas, my dear Lord, what man is so insane
For gold or for silver himself so to spill,
He that you does sell for gold or for other good?
With his great covetousness, himself, he does kill!

BARTHOLOMEW: What man soever he be of so wicked will,
Dear Lord, among us — tell us his name all out,
He that to him tends this deed to fulfill!
For his great treason, his soul stands in doubt.

PHILIP: Gold, silver, and treasure soon does pass away,
But without end ever does last your grace.
Ah, Lord, who is that trades you for money?
For he that sells his Lord — too great is the trespass.

JAMES MINOR:⁹ That traitor that does this horrible menace,

Both body and soul, I hold he be lost —
Damned to hell pit, far from your face,
Among all foul fiends to be rent and torn.

SIMON: Too bad a merchant that traitor, he is,
And for that money, he may mourning make!
Alas, what causes him to sell the King of Bliss?
For his false winning, the devil him shall take.

THOMAS: For his false treason, the fiends so black
Shall bear his soul deep down into hell pit.
Rest shall he none have, but evermore wake,
Burning in hot fire, in prison ever shut.

THADDEUS: I wonder right sore who that he should be,
Among us all brethren that should do this sin.
Alas, he is lost; there may no grace be
In deep hell dungeon, his soul he does pin.

JESUS: In my dish he eats; this treason shall begin.
Woe shall befall him for his work of dread.
He may be right sorry such riches to win,
And wish himself unborn for that sinful deed.

JUDAS: The truth would I know as much as you,
And therefore, good sir, the truth me you tell:
Which of us all here, that traitor may be?
Am I that person that you now shall sell?

JESUS: So say you yourself. Take heed at your spell.
You ask me now, here, if you do that treason?
Remember yourself; advise you right well!
You are of great age and know what is reason.

Here Judas rises privily and goes in the place and says, "Now counterfeited."

JUDAS: Now counterfeited, I have a privy secret,
My master's power for to fell.
I, Judas, shall try by some pretext
Unto the Jews him for to sell.

Some money for him, yet would I tell
By privy means, I shall try.
My intent I shall fulfill,
No longer I will make delay.

The highest of priests now be present.
Unto them, now my way I take.
I will go telling them my intent;
I know full merry I shall them make!

Money I will none forsake
And they proffer to my pleasing.
For covetousness, I will with them wake,
And unto my master, I shall them bring.

Hail, rulers and priests that be present!
New tidings to you I come to tell!
If you will follow my intent,
My master, Jesus, I will you sell,

His intent and purpose for to fell,
For I will no longer follow his law.
Let us see what money that I shall make,
And let Jesus, my master, be hanged and drawn.

GAMALIEL: Now, welcome, Judas, our own friend!
Take him in, sirs, by the hand!
We shall both give you and lend,
And in every quarrel by you stand.

REWFYN: Judas, what shall we for your master pay?
Your silver is ready, and we accord:
The payment shall have no delay,
But be laid down here at a word.

JUDAS: Let the money here down be laid,
And I shall tell you as I can.
In old terms, I have heard said:
"That money makes the merchant."

REWFYN: Here is thirty plates of silver bright
Fast knit within this glove.
And if we may have your master this night,
This shall you have and all our love.

JUDAS: You are reasonable merchants to buy and sell.
This bargain with you now shall I make!
I agree! You shall have all your will,
For money will I none forsake.

LEYON: Now, this bargain is made full and fast:

Neither part may it forsake!
But, Judas, you must tell us in haste
By what means we shall him take.

REWFYN: Yes, there be many that him never saw
Which we will send to him in fere.¹⁰
Therefore, by a token, we must him know
That must be privy between us here.

LEYON: Yes, beware of that, for anything!
For one disciple is like your master in all apparel,
And you go alike in all clothing,
So might we of our purpose fail.

JUDAS: As for that, sirs, have you no doubt.
I shall ordain, so you shall not miss.
When that you come, him all about,
Take the man that I shall kiss.

I must go to my master again.
Doubt not, sirs, this matter is sure enough.

GAMALIEL: Farewell, Judas, our friend certain!
Your labor, we shall right well allow.

JUDAS: Now will I subtly go seek my master again,
And make good face as I naught knew —
I have him sold to woe and pain.
I trow¹¹ full sore he shall it rue!

Here Judas goes in subtly where he came from.

ANNAS: Lo, sirs, a part we have of our intent.
For to take Jesus now, we must provide
A subtle many to be present
That dare fight and will abide.

GAMALIEL: Ordain each man on his party —
Cressets,¹² lanterns, and torches light —
And this night to be there ready
With axes, glaives,¹³ and swords bright.

CAIAPHAS: No longer, then, make we tarrying,
But each man to his place be ready,
And ordain privily for this thing
That it be done this same night.

*Here the bishops part in the place, and each of them takes their leave by countenance,
resorting each man to his place with their many to make ready to take Christ. And then shall
the place where Christ is suddenly uncloset round about, showing Christ sitting at the table,
and his disciples, each in their degree, Christ thus saying:*

JESUS: Brethren, this lamb that was set us before
That we all have eaten in this night,
It was commanded by my Father to Moses and Aaron
When they were with the children of Israel in Egypt.

And as we with unleavened breads have it eaten,
And also with the bitter clover,
And as we take the head with the feet
So did they in all manner thing.

And as we stood, so did they stand,
And their loins, they girded verily,
With shoes on their feet and staves in their hand.
And as we eat it, so did they hastily.

This figure shall cease; another shall follow thereby
Which shall be of my body that am your head,
Which shall be showed to you by a mystery
Of my flesh and blood in form of bread.

And with fervent desire of heart's affection,
I have entirely desired to keep my Maundy
Among you, before I suffer my Passion,
For of this, no more together sup shall we.

And as the paschal lamb eaten have we,
In the Old Law was used for a sacrifice;
So the new lamb that shall be sacred by me
Shall be used for a sacrifice most of price.

*Here shall Jesus take a wafer in his hand, looking upward into heaven to the Father, thus
saying:*

Wherefore to the Father of Heaven that is eternal,
Thanking and honor I yield unto you,
To whom by the Godhead I am equal,
But by my manhood, I am of less degree.

Wherefore I, as man, worship the Deity,
Thanking you, Father, that you will show this mystery

And thus through your might, Father, and blessing of me,
Of this that was bread, is made my body.

Here shall he speak again to his disciples, thus saying:

Brethren, by the virtue of these words that rehearsed be,
This that shows as bread to your appearance
Is made the very flesh and blood of me,
To the which they that will be saved must give credence.

And as in the Old Law, it was commanded and precept
To eat this lamb to the destruction of Pharaoh unkind,
So to destroy your ghostly enemy, this shall be kept
For your paschal lamb into the world's end.

For this is the very lamb without spot of sin
Of which John the Baptist did prophesy
When this prophecy he did begin
Saying: "Ecce agnus Dei."¹⁴

And how you shall eat this lamb, I shall give information:
In the same form as the Old Law does specify,
As I show the ghostly interpretation.
Therefore to that, I shall say your wits look you reply.

With no bitter bread, this bread eaten shall be:
That is to say, with no bitterness of hate and envy,
But with the sweet bread of love and charity,
Which fortifies the soul greatly.

And it should be eaten with the bitter suckling:
That is to mean, if a man be of sinful disposition,
Has led his life here with misgiving;
Therefore in his heart, he shall have bitter contrition.

Also the head with the feet, eaten shall you:
By "the head," you shall understand my Godhead,
And by "the feet," you shall take my humanity.
These twain, you shall receive together, indeed.

This immaculate lamb, that I shall you give,
Is not only the Godhead alone,
But both God and man, thus must you believe.
Thus, the head with the feet, you shall receive each one.

Of this lamb uneaten, if aught be left, it is,¹⁵

It should be cast in the clear fire and burnt:
Which is to mean, if you understand not all this,
Put your faith in God, and then you shall not be shent.

The girdle that was commanded, their reins to spread,
Shall be the girdle of cleanness and chastity:
That is to say, to be continent in word, thought, and deed,
And all lecherous living, cast you for to flee.

And the shoes that shall be your feet upon
Is not else but example of virtuous living
Of your forefathers, you before.
With these shoes, my steps you shall be following.

And the staff that in your hands you shall hold
Is not else but the examples to other men teach.
Hold fast your staves in your hands, and be bold,
To every creature, my precepts for to preach.

Also you must eat this paschal lamb hastily,
Of which meaning, this is the very intent:
At every hour and time you shall be ready
For to fulfill my commandment.

For though you live this day, you are not sure
Whether you shall live tomorrow or naught.
Therefore, hastily every hour, do your diligent work
To keep my precepts, and then need you not doubt.

Now have I learned you how you shall eat
Your paschal lamb that is my precious body.
Now I will feed you all with angel's meat.
Wherefore to receive it, come forth seriatimally.¹⁶

PETER: Lord, for to receive this ghostly sustenance
In due form, it exceeds my intelligence,
For no man of himself may have stature,
To receive it with too much reverence.

For with more delicious meat, Lord, you may us not feed
Than with your own precious body.
Wherefore, what I have trespassed in word, thought or deed
With bitter contrition, Lord, I ask you mercy.

When our Lord gives his body to his disciples, he shall say to each of them, except to Judas:

JESUS: This is my body, flesh, and blood
That for you shall die upon the rood.¹⁷

And when Judas comes last, our Lord shall say to him:

Judas, are you advised what you shall take?

JUDAS: Lord, your body I will not forsake.

And then, our Lord shall say unto Judas:

JESUS: My body, to you I will not deny.
Since you will presume thereupon,
It shall be your damnation, verily.
I give you warning now before.

And after that Judas has received, he shall sit where he was, Christ saying:

JESUS: One of you has betrayed me
That at my board with me has eaten.
Better it had him for to be
Both unborn and unbegotten.

Then each disciple shall look on other, and Peter shall say:

PETER: Lord, it is not I!

And so all shall say till they come at Judas which shall say:

JUDAS: Is it aught I, Lord?

Then Jesus shall say:

JESUS: Judas, you say that word.

Me you have sold that was your friend.
That you have begun, bring to an end.

Then Judas shall go again to the Jews, and if men will, shall meet with him and say this speech following or leave it whether they will, the devil thus saying:

DEMON: Ah! Ah! Judas, darling mine!
You are the best to me that ever was born!
You shall be crowned in hell's pain,
And thereof, you shall be secure forevermore!

You have sold your master and eaten him, also.
I would you could bring him to hell entire,
But yet I fear he should do there some sorrow and woe
That all hell shall cry out on me at that time.

Speed up your matter that you have begun!
I shall to hell to make for you ready.
Soon, you shall come where you shall dwell —
In fire and stink shall sit me by.

JESUS: Now, the Son of God glorified is,
And God in him is glorified also.
I am sorry that Judas has lost his bliss
Which shall turn him to sorrow and woe.

But now in the memory of my Passion,
To be partable¹⁸ with me in my reign above,
You shall drink my blood with great devotion,
Which shall be shed for man's love.

Take these chalices of the New Testament
And keep this ever in your mind.
As often as you do this with true intent,
It shall defend you from the fiend.

Then shall the disciples come and take the blood, Jesus saying:

JESUS: This is my blood that for man's sin out of my heart, it shall run.

And the disciples shall set them again where they were, and Jesus shall say:

Take heed, now brethren, what I have done.
With my flesh and blood, I have you fed.
For man's love, I may do no more.

Wherefore, Peter and you every one,
If you love me, feed my sheep,
That for want of teaching, they go not wrong,
But ever to them take good keep.

Give them my body, as I have to you,
Which shall be sacred by my word,
And ever I shall thus abide with you
Into the end of the world.

Whoso eats my body and drinks my blood

Whole God and man he shall I take.
I shall defend him from the devil mad,
And at his death, I shall not him forsake.

And whoso does not eat my body nor drink my blood,
Life in him is not at all.
Keep well this in mind for your good,
And every man save himself well.

Here Jesus takes a basin with water and towel girt about him, and falls before Peter on his one knee.

Another example I shall you show,
How you shall live in charity.
Sit here down at words few
And what I do, you suffer me.

Here he takes the basin and the towel and does as the red ink¹⁹ says before:

PETER: Lord, what will you with me do?
This service of you, I will forsake —
To wash my feet, you shall not so!
I am not worthy, of it you to take.

JESUS: Peter, and if you forsake my service all,
The which to you that I shall do,
With me no part have you shall,
And never come my bliss unto!

PETER: That part, Lord, we will not forgo!
We shall obey his commandment.
Wash head and hand, we pray you so;
We will do after your intent.

Here Jesus washes his disciples' feet by and by, and wipes them and kisses them meekly. And then sits him down, thus saying:

JESUS: Friends, this washing shall now prevail.
Your lord and master you do me call,
And so I am without fail,
Yet I have washed you all.

A memory of this you have shall
That each of you shall do to each other
With humble heart submit equal,
As each of you were each other's brother.

Nothing, sirs, so well pleases me
Nor no life that man may lead
As they that live in charity.
In heaven, I shall reward their deeds.

The day is come — I must proceed
For to fulfill the prophecy:
This night, for me, you shall have dread
When number of people shall on me cry.

For the prophets spoke of me,
And said of death, that I should take,
From which death I will not flee,
But for man's sin amends make.

This night, I from you led shall be,
And you, for fear, from me shall flee.
Not once dare speak when I you call,
And some of you forsake me.

For you shall I die and rise again.
On the third day, you shall me see
Before you all walking plain
In the land of Galilee.

PETER: Lord, I will you never forsake,
Nor for no perils, from you flee!
I will rather my death take
Than once, Lord, forsake you!

JESUS: Peter, it is farther than you do know.
As for that promise, look you not make,
For before the cock has twice crowed,
Thrice you shall me forsake.

But all my friends that are to me dear,
Let us go — the time draws nigh.
We may no longer abide here,
For I must walk to Bethany.

The time is come — the day draws near —
Unto my death I must be in haste.
Now, Peter, make all your fellows cheer.
My flesh, for fear, is quaking fast.

28. Betrayal; Procession of Saints

Here Jesus goes toward Bethany, and his disciples following with sad countenance, Jesus saying:

JESUS: Now, my dear friends and brethren each one:

Remember the words that I shall say.

The time is come that I must begone

For to fulfill the prophecy

That is said of me — that I shall die,

The fiend's power from you to banish,

Which death I will not deny,

Man's soul, my spouse, for to redeem.

The oil of mercy is granted plain

By this journey that I shall take.

By my Father, I am sent, certain,

Between God and man, an agreement to make.

Man, for my brother, may I not forsake,

Nor show him unkindness, by no way.

In pains for him, my body shall shake,

And for love of man, man shall die.

Here Jesus and his disciples go toward the Mount of Olivet. And when he comes a little there beside in a place like to a park, he bids his disciples abide him there and says to Peter before he goes:

Peter, with your fellows, here shall you abide

And watch until I come again.

I must make my prayer here you beside.

My flesh quakes sore, for fear and pain.

PETER: Lord, your request does me constrain.

In this place I shall abide still,

Not remove until that you come again,

In accordance, Lord, with your will.

Here Jesus goes to Olivet and sets himself down on his knees and prays to his Father, thus saying:

JESUS: O, Father, Father, for my sake

This great Passion, you take from me

Which is ordained that I shall take!

If man's soul saved may be,

And if it behooves, Father, for me
To save man's soul that should be ruined,
I am ready in each degree,
The will of you for to fulfill.

Here Jesus goes to his disciples and finds them sleeping, Jesus thus saying to Peter:

Peter, Peter, you sleep fast!
Awake your fellows and sleep no more!
Of my death, are you not afraid?
You take your rest, and I pain sore!

Here Christ goes again the second time to Olivet and says kneeling:

Father in Heaven, I beseech you:
Remove my pains by your great grace,
And let me from this death flee,
As I did never any trespass!

The water and blood out of my face
Distills for pains that I shall take.
My flesh quakes in fearful case
As though the joints asunder should shake!

Here Jesus goes again to his disciples and finds them asleep, Jesus thus saying, lets them lie:

Father, the third time I come again,
Fully my errand for to speed —
Deliver me, Father, from this pain
Which is brought back with full great dread!

Unto your Son, Father, take heed!
You know I did no deed but good.
It is not for me, this pain I suffer,
But for man, I sweat both water and blood.

Here an angel descends to Jesus and brings to him a chalice with a host therein.

ANGEL: Hail, both God and man, indeed!
The Father has sent you this present.
He bade that you should not dread,
But fulfill his intent

As the Parliament of Heaven has meant,
That man's soul shall now redeemed be.
From heaven to earth, Lord, you were sent,

That deed belongs to you.

This chalice is your blood; this bread is your body
For man's sin ever offered shall be.
To the Father of Heaven that is almighty,
Your disciples and all priesthood shall offer for you.

Here the angel ascends again suddenly.

JESUS: Father, your will fulfilled shall be.
There is nothing to say against the case:
I shall fulfill the prophecy
And suffer death for man's trespass.

Here goes Christ again to his disciples and finds them sleeping still.

Awake, Peter, your rest is full long!
Of sleep, you will make no delay!
Judas is ready with people strong
And does his part, me to betray.

Rise up, sirs you, I pray!
Open your eyes for my sake!
We shall walk into the way
And see them come that shall me take!

Peter, when you see I am forsaken
Among my friends and stand alone,
All the comfort that you can make
Give to your brethren, everyone.

Here Jesus with his disciples goes into the place, and there shall come in ten persons well seen in white armor and battle gear, and some disguised in other garments with swords, lances, and other strange weapons as oil lanterns with fire and lanterns and torches lit. And Judas foremost of all conveying them to Jesus by gesture, Jesus thus saying:

JESUS: Sirs, in your way, you have great haste
To seek him that will not flee!
Of you, I am right not afraid.
Tell me, sirs, whom seek you?

LEYON: Whom we seek here, I tell you now,
A traitor who is worthy to suffer death!
We know he is here among you —
His name is Jesus of Nazareth.

JESUS: Sirs, I am here and will not flee.
Do to me all that you can,
For truth, I tell you, I am he,
Jesus of Nazareth, that same man.

Here all the Jews fall suddenly to the earth when they hear Christ speak. And when he bids them rise, they rise again, Christ thus saying:

Arise, sirs! Whom seek you? Fast have you gone!
Is your coming hither for me?
I stand before you here, each one,
That you may both know me and see.

REWFYN: Jesus of Nazareth we seek,
If we might him here espy.

JESUS: I told you, now with words meek
Before you all, that it was I.

JUDAS: Welcome, Jesus, my master dear!
I have sought you in many a place!
I am full glad I find you here,
For I knew never where you were.

Here Judas kisses Jesus. And soon all the Jews come about him and lay hands on him and pull him as they were crazy and make on him a great cry all at once. And after this, Peter says:

PETER: I draw my sword now, this moment!
Shall I strike, master? Gladly would I know!

And forthwith he smites off Malchus' ear, and he cries, "Help! My ear! My ear!" And Christ blesses it, and it is whole.

JESUS: Put your sword in the sheath, fair and well,
For he that smites with sword, with sword shall be smitten.

Ah, Judas, this treason have you contrived?
And that you shall full sore repent!
You had better have been unborn now.
Your body and soul you have destroyed.

GAMALIEL: Lo, Jesus, you may not the case refuse!
Both treason and heresy in you is found.
Study now fast on your excuse
While that you go in cords bound.

You call yourself king of this world round!
Now let me see your great power,
And save yourself here whole and sound,
And bring yourself out of this danger!

LEYON: Bring forth this traitor! Spare him not!
Unto Caiaphas, your judge, we shall you lead.
In many a place you we have sought,
And to your works, take good heed.

REWFYN: Come on, Jesus, and follow me!
I am full glad that you I have!
You shall be hanged upon a tree,
A million of gold shall you not save!

LEYON: Let me lay hand on him in haste!
Unto his death, I shall him bring!
Show forth your witchcraft and black magic!
What helps you now, all your false working?

JESUS: Friends, take heed, you do wrong!
So cruelly with cords to bind me here,
And thus to fall on me by night
As though I were a thief's companion?

Many times before you I did appear
Within the temple, seen me you have,
The laws of God to teach and counsel,
To them that will their souls save.

Why did you not me disprove
And heard me preach, both loud and low?
But now as madmen, you begin to rave
And do things that you do not know.

GAMALIEL: Sirs, I charge you, not one word more this night,
But unto Caiaphas, in haste, him look you lead!
Have him forth with great despite
And to his words take you no heed.

Here the Jews lead Christ out of the place with great cry and noise, some drawing Christ forward and some backward, and so leading forth with their weapons aloft and lights burning. And in the meantime, Mary Magdalene shall run to Our Lady and tell her of our Lord's taking, thus saying:

MARY MAGDALENE: O, immaculate mother of all women, most meek,

O, devoutest in holy meditation ever abiding,
The cause, lady, that I to your person seek
Is to know if you have heard any tidings

Of your sweet son and my reverent Lord Jesus,
That was your daily solace, your spiritual consolation.

MARY: I would you should tell me, Magdalene, if you knew,
For to hear of him, it is all my affection.

MARY MAGDALENE: I would gladly tell, lady, if I might for weeping!
For truth, lady, to the Jews, he is sold!
With cords they have him bound and have him in keeping.
They beat him cruelly and have him fast in hand!

MARY: Ah! Ah! Ah! How my heart is cold!
A heart hard as stone, how may you last
When these sorrowful tidings are you told!
So would to God, heart, that you might burst!

Ah, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus!
Why should you suffer this tribulation and adversity?
How may they find in their hearts, you to pursue,
That never trespassed in any degree,

For never a thing but that was good thought you.
Wherefore, then, should you suffer this great pain?
I suppose, verily, it is for my trespass,
And I know that my heart should cleave in twain!

For these sorrows may I sustain?
The sword of sorrow has so pierced my mind!
Alas, what may I do? Alas, what may I say?
These agonies, my heart asunder they do rend.

O Father of Heaven, where are all your promises
That you promised me when a mother you made me?
Your blessed son I bore between two beasts,
And now the bright color of his face does fade.

Ah, good Father, why would you that your own dear Son shall suffer all this?
And he did never against your law, but ever was obedient.
And to every creature most pitiful, most gentle, and benign, indeed;
And now for all these kindnesses is now most shamefully disgraced?

Why will you, gracious Father, that it shall be so?

Why may man not else be saved by no other kind?
Yet, Lord Father, then, that shall comfort my woe
When man is saved by my child and brought to a good end.

Now, dear son, since you have ever been so full of mercy
That will not spare yourself, for the love you have to man.
On all mankind, now have your pity,
And also think on your mother, that grieving woman.

Procession of Saints

DOCTOR 1: Oh, you altitude of all spiritual riches!
O, you incomprehensible one of great excellence!
O, you luminary of pure lightness,
Shoot out your beams unto this audience!

DOCTOR 2: Oh, Son of the Most High, called by eternity!
Heal this congregation with the salve of your Passion.
And we pray you, Spirit Paraclete,²⁰
With the fire of your love, to quench all detraction.

DOCTOR 1: To the people not learned, I stand as a teacher
Of this procession, to give information;
And to them that be learned, as a spiritual preacher
That in my rehearsal, they may have delectation.²¹

DOCTOR 2: Welcome of the apostles, the glorious choir!
First, Peter, your prince and also your president.
And Andrew, your half-brother, together in company
That first followed Christ, by one assent.

DOCTOR 1: Oh, you two luminaries, James and John,
Continually burning as bright as the sunbeam,
With the chain of charity, both knit in one
And offered of your mother, to Christ in Jerusalem.

DOCTOR 2: Welcome, Philip, that converted Samaritan
And converted the treasurer of the Queen Candace²²
With James, the Lesser, that at Jerusalem
Was made first patriarch by the ordinance of Cephas.²³

DOCTOR 1: Hail, Matthew, the apostle and also evangelist
That was called to the flock of spiritual life
From darkness of conscience that you were fixed in
With Bartholomew that fled all carnal temptation.

DOCTOR 2: Hail, Simon Zelotes, thus be your name,
And Judas that both well-loved our Lord.
Therefore, you have both joy and game²⁴
Where never is strife, but good accord.

DOCTOR 1: Hail, Paul, great doctor of the faith
And vessel chosen by true election!
Hail, Thomas, of whom the Gospel says
In Christ's wound was your sustenance.

DOCTOR 2: Hail, John Baptist, most sovereign creature
That ever was born by natural conceiving,
And highest of prophets, as witnesses scripture.
Hail, voice that in desert was always crying.

¹ Passover meal.

² Chalcedony is known as the third foundation stone of the New Jerusalem; here it symbolizes a heavenly and divinely ordained spiritual path.

³ Put to shame, disgraced, ruined or destroyed.

⁴ Advice, counsel.

⁵ A corrupt temporal judge or accuser of Jesus. Leyon is another.

⁶ Gallows.

⁷ Muddy area or low land.

⁸ This is James, son of Zebedee, one of the three Apostles in Jesus' inner circle.

⁹ This is James, son of Alphaeus, identified in medieval tradition as "the brother of the Lord."

¹⁰ A companion.

¹¹ To believe or accept.

¹² An open vessel, such as a metal cup, to hold oil for a torch.

¹³ Various sharp-edged or pointed weapons.

¹⁴ "Behold the Lamb of God."

¹⁵ Certainly, surely, or indeed.

¹⁶ Sequentially or one by one.

¹⁷ Crucifix or cross.

¹⁸ To carry.

¹⁹ Rules were written in red ink so this would mean an official rule.

²⁰ An advocate or comforter.

²¹ Great pleasure, joy, or delight.

²² A dynastic title for a succession of powerful ruling queen mothers of the ancient African kingdom of Kush.

²³ Another name for Peter.

²⁴ Mirth, delight, or worldly pleasure.