

GETHSEMANE

Brynmawr Square

Narrator Welcome to our Passion Play.

Shouts of joy in the streets and alleys fade as Jesus and his disciples make their way to a quiet olive grove.

The disciples are disturbed, wondering about what they have just heard Jesus say at the Passover meal- that one of them would betray Him.

Judas is with the High Priest, assembling a force to arrest Jesus. Beneath the night sky of Gethsemane, in the hour of decision, Jesus recoils from what he knows is going to happen.

Jesus *(To his disciples.)* Sit here while I go and pray.

Peter, James, John – come with me

(Jesus with Peter, James and John move away from the rest of the disciples.)

Jesus *(To Peter, James, John)* My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch.

(Jesus moves away to be on his own – kneeling he prays)

Jesus Abba, Father, everything is possible for you. Take this cup from Me. Yet not what I will, but what You will.

(Jesus returns to Peter, James and John and finds them asleep)

Jesus Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing but the body is weak.

(Once again Jesus moves away and prays. He returns to find the three asleep again. This time He does not wake them, but goes to pray alone for the third time. Then He comes back and rouses them and all the disciples.)

Jesus Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up! Let us go. Here comes my betrayer.

(The crowd and Judas arrive on the scene.)

Judas The one I kiss is the man. Arrest him and lead him away under guard.

Judas *(Approaching Jesus and kissing him.)* Rabbi!

Jesus Judas, would you betray me with a kiss?

(Confusion ensues – swords are drawn and a servant's ear is cut off. Crowd reacts.)

Jesus Enough! Put up your sword, for all those who draw the sword will die by the sword.

(Jesus heals the servant's ear. Crowd reacts in amazement.)

Jesus Am I leading a rebellion that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me?

Every day I was teaching with you, teaching in the temple courts, and you did not arrest me, but the scriptures must be fulfilled.

Narrator Jesus is lead away to face the Jewish High court known as the Sanhedrin.

Meanwhile, His close friend Peter is being tested.

Please follow us to the next scene across the road, outside Roberts' Florist.

PETER DISOWNS JESUS

Roberts Florist

Props : Fire

Narrator While Jesus was being interrogated, Peter waited outside in the courtyard.

SG1 You were with that Nazarene, Jesus.
Peter I don't know what you're talking about.
(Peter withdraws)

SG2 This fellow is one of them.

Peter *(Shaking his head in denial.)* I'm not! I don't know him.

SG3 Surely you are one of them. You come from Galilee.

Peter May God strike me if I lie! I don't know this man you're talking about.

Narrator The cock crows and Peter remembers that Jesus had said to him:
Voice of Before the cock crows twice, you will say three times that you do not
Jesus know me.
(Peter breaks down.)

Peter Jesus, what a wretched man I am. How low I have fallen. You, my friend and teacher, I have denied you. I have denied you three times. You, for whom I promised to go to my death. Lord, if you will still have mercy on me then send it so that I may receive it – my heart longs to know you have forgiven me.

Narrator Jesus is taken before the Jewish Sanhedrin for further questioning where He is falsely accused of many things. In the next scene, we will find Jesus being further interrogated, this time by the Roman authorities.

Please can you follow us to the next scene at the bottom of Asda car park, by the lake.

JESUS BEFORE PILATE Asda car park by the lake.

Props : Bowl for hand washing

Narrator Jesus has been bound and led away. He has been condemned by the Jewish ruling council, but they cannot order a man to be executed. Instead they hand Jesus over to the Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate, for the death sentence to be passed.

(Crowd murmurs loudly as they gather. Pilate comes out and Jesus is pushed in front of him. Pilate signals to the crowd to be quiet).

Narrator The chief priests accused Jesus of many things.

SCM1 He's a trouble maker.

(Crowd jeers. Pilate signals for silence, then to the Sanhedrin to continue)

SCM2 He said we shouldn't pay our taxes.

(Again crowd jeers. Pilate signals for silence, then to the Sanhedrin to continue)

SCM3 He said he would destroy our Temple.

(Again crowd jeers. Pilate signals for silence)

Pilate *(To Jesus)* Aren't you going to answer? See how many things they accuse you of.

(Jesus remains silent and Pilate seems perplexed.)

High Priest He said he is the King of the Jews.

(Crowd jeers and backs the accusation, urging Pilate to do something about it)

Pilate *(To Jesus)* Are you the King of the Jews?

Jesus It is as you say.

(Crowd disgusted, and shout that they have no king but Caesar, and who is this usurper and that He is guilty of sedition and rebellion against the Romans. Pilate quietens them again)

Pilate *(To the crowd)* At this Festival I will release to you one prisoner. Do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?

High Priest No, release.... Barabbas!

(Crowd takes up the shout "Release Barabbas". This gets louder and louder as a chant. Pilate eventually gets control of the crowd again)

Pilate What then shall I do with the one you call the King of the Jews?

High Priest Crucify him!

(Crowd takes up the shout "Crucify him", eventually turning into a chant 'CRU-CI_FY!!!')

Pilate Why? What crime has he committed?

Crowd *(Louder and more violent.)* Crucify him! Crucify him! CRU_CI_FY!

CRU_CI_FY! *(keep repeating)*

(Pilate signals for the bowl to be brought to him)

Bowl lifted up to Pilate

(Pilate washes his hands, and dries them on the towel)

Pilate I find no fault in this man. Nevertheless, as you have insisted, guards take Him away, and if you see fit, crucify Him.

Crowd *(Cheer with delight)*

Narrator After Pilate has washed his hands of the matter, Jesus is led away by the soldiers to be crucified.

THE SOLDIERS' MOCKERY

Asda car park by the lake

Props : Sceptre, crown of thorns, robe, whip, clapper-board

- Narrator Please turn around to face the Willow Tree, for the next scene.
- Narrator The soldiers take Jesus into their barracks to make fun of him before he is crucified.
- Centurion Now you can have some fun! Thinks he's the King of the Jews does he? There's only one King worth listening to around here, our emperor. Here, get this robe off and put this on him. *(Giving them the purple robe.)*
(The soldiers untie Jesus' hands, take off his robe and put the purple robe on him.)
- Centurion Now you *(to the soldiers)*, get some brambles and make a crown for him.
(The soldier fetches the crown of thorns and puts it on Jesus.)
- Centurion You *(to the other soldier,)* get something for a sceptre. He can't be a king without a sceptre, can he?
(The second soldier fetches the reed sceptre and puts it in Jesus' hand.)
- Centurion Now, lets see you bow down to him. If he's a king, you ought to pay him honour!
(The soldiers kneel in front of Jesus and bow down to him.)
- Soldier 1 Hail, your majesty!
Soldier 2 Hail, king of the Jews!
Both *(Laughing)* We pay you honour!
- Centurion All right, that's enough. Now get him ready for the death walk. Get those things off him, flog him and lets get going. We've got an appointment to keep.
(The soldiers take the reed, take off the crown of thorns and the purple robe and whip Jesus. This must be done very carefully. Then they put his own robe back on.)
Snap the clapper-board in time with the flogging
- Centurion *(To Jesus.)* Here, you. Get this cross on your back and be on your way. Some king!

THE ROAD TO GOLGOTHA

Outside Home Bargains

Narrator The soldiers lead Jesus on the way to the place of execution outside the city. It is called Golgotha, Skull Hill.

(On the way to Golgotha, the soldiers go in front to clear the way and the centurion follows behind Jesus. Jesus stumbles and nearly falls several times, and finally collapses.)

Narrator Jesus stumbled many times, so the soldiers compelled a man from the crowd, Simon of Cyrene, to carry the cross for him.

Centurion Here, you. He can't take it, so you'll have to. Pick it up and follow those two. They'll show you the way.

THE CRUCIFIXION

Hill above Asda car park

Props : Sponge and bucket, nails, sign, hammer.

Narrator Please stand on the grass or single file on the path so that people can pass by.

Narrator When they reached Golgotha, the place of crucifixion, the soldiers stripped Jesus of his clothes and sandals and nailed him to a cross.

Centurion Right. Get that cross laid down here.
(The soldiers take the cross from Simon and place at the end of the stand and lay it flat.)

Centurion Now, strip the king and get him on there.
(The soldiers remove Jesus' robe, lie him on top of the cross, and tie and "nail" his hands and feet.)

Jesus Father forgive them. They don't know what they are doing.

Narrator It was nine o'clock in the morning and a notice nailed to the cross, describing the charge against him, read "KING OF THE JEWS".
Two robbers were also crucified at the same time, one on each side.

Centurion Fix this over his head and lift him up! Let them all see what Rome does to "kings".
(The soldiers fix the notice, lift the cross and secure it in its slot.)

Narrator As Jesus hung there, the soldiers gambled for his clothes.

Centurion Well now, here one of your perks. You have his clothes.

Soldier 1 Shame to spoil that robe. The blood'll soon wash off. Dice you for it.

Soldier 2 You're on. Best throw takes the lot.

Soldier 1 You bet and Mercury'll see me win. I sacrificed to him only yesterday.
(Soldier 1 takes the dice, rolls them and shouts out his score.)

Soldier 1 Well, that's me. See if you can beat that.
(Soldier 2 takes the dice, rolls them and shouts out his score. Winning soldier shouts in triumph and bundles the robe and sandals together.)

Voice from the crowd So! You who is going to destroy our temple and build it again in three days, come down from the cross and save yourself.

High Priest He saved others, but he can't save himself. Let this Christ, this King of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we might see and believe.
(Women kneel around the cross. Mary and John are at the front of the group.)

Narrator Jesus saw his mother and his disciple John in the crowd near the cross.

Jesus Woman, here is your son. John, here is your mother.

Narrator At midday there came a darkness over all the land and it lasted for three it hours.

Jesus Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

Jesus I am thirsty
(Soldier 1 brings a sponge on a stick and lifts it to Jesus' mouth.)

Jesus It is finished. Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.
(Women wail in grief.)

Centurion Truly, this was the Son of God.

Narrator

He was born in an obscure village, the son of a peasant woman. Growing up, He worked as a carpenter until He was thirty. Then for three years He became a wandering preacher.

He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never had a family or owned a house. He didn't go to college. He never visited a big city. He never travelled two hundred miles from the place where He was born. He did none of those things one usually associates with greatness.

He had no credentials but himself.

He was only thirty-three when the tide of public opinion turned against him. His friends ran away. He was turned over to his enemies and went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed to a cross between two thieves. While He was dying, his executioners gambled for his clothing, the only property He had on earth. When He was dead He was laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend.

On the third day He rose from the dead and now sits at the right hand of the Father and will come again on the clouds of Heaven.

Twenty centuries have come and gone, and today He is the central figure of the human race; even our calendar originates from the time of His birth. All the armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever sailed, all the parliaments that ever sat, all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man on this earth as much as that One Solitary Life.