



## **GETHSEMANE ACCORDING TO MATTHEW**

<sup>36</sup> Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." <sup>37</sup> He took along Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to feel sorrow and distress. <sup>38</sup> Then he said to them, "My soul is sorrowful even to death. Remain here and keep watch with me."

<sup>39</sup> He advanced a little and fell prostrate in prayer, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as you will."

<sup>40</sup> When he returned to his disciples he found them asleep. He said to Peter, "So you could not keep watch with me for one hour? <sup>41</sup> Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

<sup>42</sup> Withdrawing a second time, he prayed again, "My Father, if it is not possible that this cup pass without my drinking it, your will be done!"

<sup>43</sup> Then he returned once more and found them asleep, for they could not keep their eyes open. <sup>44</sup> He left them and withdrew again and prayed a third time, saying the same thing again. <sup>45</sup> Then he returned to his disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Behold, the hour is at hand when the Son of Man is to be handed over to sinners. <sup>46</sup> Get up, let us go. Look, my betrayer is at hand."

<sup>47</sup> While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived, accompanied by a large crowd, with swords and clubs, who had come from the chief priests and the elders of the people. <sup>48</sup> His betrayer had arranged a sign with them, saying, "The man I shall kiss is the one; arrest him." <sup>49</sup> Immediately he went over to Jesus and said, "Hail, Rabbi!" and he kissed him. <sup>50</sup> Jesus answered him, "Friend, do what you have come for." Then stepping forward they laid hands on Jesus and arrested him.

<sup>51</sup> And behold, one of those who accompanied Jesus put his hand to his sword, drew it, and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his ear. <sup>52</sup> Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its sheath, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. <sup>53</sup> Do you think that I cannot call upon my Father and he will not provide me at this moment with more than twelve legions of angels? <sup>54</sup> But then how would the scriptures be fulfilled which say that it must come to pass in this way?"

<sup>55</sup> At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to seize me? Day after day I sat teaching in the temple area, yet you did not arrest me. <sup>56</sup> But all this has come to pass that the writings of the prophets may be fulfilled." Then all the disciples left him and fled.

(Matt 26,36-56)

### **Brief Commentary:**

The holding called the Gethsemane, the place of the oil-mill, is indicated by Matthew and Mark as the place where the drama of Jesus' Passion really began. Human weakness in that moment of sadness and deep anxiety is characterised by

Jesus' prayer who begs the Father three times "Let this cup pass away from me": another biblical expression to show the terrible fate that God reserved to his opponents.

Jesus reminded his sleeping disciples to pray so as to "not fall into temptation". This teaching is included in the prayer of the Our Father, so that the Father will not abandon his sons in the moment of difficulty but will give them the strength to overcome every temptation.

Matthew recounts Judas' greeting and kiss: it was a usual way to greet people in the East and meant a strong friendship. Jesus did not avoid this friendship and even called Judas "friend". This theme finds a lot of space in this Gospel for two reasons: the first is the no-violence and forgiveness exaltation, the second is the certainty that Jesus' arrest was part of God's plan already sketched and entrusted to the Prophets' Scriptures.