



The Watch  
with the  
Reserved Sacrament  
*Prayers & Devotions*

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March 28, 2024  
Washington National Cathedral

The Watch is a time of silent prayer and meditation before the Reserved Sacrament, representing the disciples waiting with Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Following is a selection of ancient and modern prayers and devotions for use during this sacred time.

# The Watch

## with the Reserved Sacrament

### *Prayers & Devotions*

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Washington National Cathedral  
*Prepared by the Worship Department*

## From *Readings for the Daily Office from the Early Church*

### A Reading from a Sermon of Thomas Aquinas, Priest and Friar

The happy commemoration of today's feast with its immense concourse of people invites us to prolong fervently our praises of the Most Holy Body of Christ. What could be sweeter, what more pleasing to the heart of the faithful than to exalt the abyss of his divine charity, and to glorify the overflowing torrent of his love!" At the table of the new grace the hand of the priest distributes ceaselessly his Flesh as food and his precious Blood as drink, to those who are his children and heirs of the kingdom promised to God to those who love him.

O endless Emanation of the goodness of God and of His immense love for us, admirable and worthy of all praise! In this Sacrament, where all former sacrifices are done away with, He remains with us to the end of the world; He feeds the children of adoption with the bread of angels and inebriates them with filial love.

This is the food and drink for the elect, living bread and spiritual nourishment, remedy for daily weaknesses! ... It is the table which Christ has prepared for His friends and guests, like the one on the day of His return, to replace the symbolic lamb. This is the Passover in which the victim immolated is Christ; O Christ our Passover, You want us too to pass over from vice to virtue; as once You delivered the Jews, so now You set us free in spirit. You are the food that satisfies all but the most hardened; food that is eaten by faith, tasted by fervor, assimilated by charity. O viaticum of our pilgrimage, You lead travellers to the height of virtue. Confirm my heart in good, assure it in the paths of life, give joy to my soul, purify my thoughts.

The Eucharist is bread, real bread; we eat it without consuming or dividing it; it converts but itself is not changed; it gives strength without ever losing it; it gives perfection and suffices for salvation; it gives life, it confers grace, it remits sins. It is the food of souls, a food which enlightens the intelligence of the faithful, inflames their hearts, purifies them from their shortcomings, elevates their desires.

O chalice that holy souls love to drink of, chalice of fervor, chalice changed into the Blood of Christ, to seal the new Alliance, withdraw us from the old leaven, fill our souls with yourself, that we may become a new paste and that we may go to the feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. For the Lamb without spot, who knows no touch or stain of sin, ought to be eaten with unleavened bread. We should not approach without be cleansed by confession, without having a solid foundation of faith, without being charity.

Come to the Lord's supper if you wish to come to the nuptials of the Lamb; there, we shall be inebriated with the riches of the house of God, we shall see the King of glory and the God of hosts in all his beauty, we shall eat this bread in the kingdom of our Father.



EVENING PRAYERS  
THURSDAY

*Prayer of Thanksgiving*

May the thanks we express this evening, Lord,  
be for us a foretaste of the grateful joy  
which fills our hearts when your kingdom comes.  
Until then, let us grow ever stronger  
in faith, hope, and love.  
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Psalm 61*

In God alone is my soul at rest;  
my help comes from him.  
He alone is my rock, my stronghold,  
my fortress: I stand firm.

How long will you all attack one man  
to break him down,  
as though he were a tottering wall,  
or a tumbling fence?

In God alone be at rest, my soul;  
for my hope comes from him.  
He alone is my rock, my stronghold,  
my fortress: I stand firm.

In God is my safety and glory,  
the rock of my strength.  
Take refuge in God all you people.  
Trust him at all times.  
Pour out your hearts before him  
for God is our refuge.

For God has said only one thing:  
only two do I know:  
that to God alone belongs power  
and to you, Lord, love;  
and that you repay each man  
according to his deeds.

Nothing is to be done out of jealousy or vanity;  
instead, out of humility of mind  
everyone should give preference to others,  
everyone pursuing not selfish interests  
but those of others.

Make your own the mind of Christ Jesus:

Who, being in the form of God  
did not count equality with God  
something to be grasped.

But he emptied himself  
taking the form of a slave,  
becoming as human beings are;  
and being in every way like a human being,  
he was humbler yet,  
even to accepting death,  
death on a cross.

And for this God raised him high  
and gave him the name  
which is above all other names;  
so that all beings  
in the heavens, on earth and in the underworld,  
should bend the knee at the name of Jesus  
and that every tongue should acclaim  
Jesus Christ as Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.

*Our Father... Hail Mary...*

*Concluding Prayer*

I hand over to your care, Lord,  
my soul and body, my mind and thoughts,  
my prayers and my hopes, my health and my work,  
my life and my death, my parents and my family,  
my friends and my neighbors,  
my country and all men.  
Today and always. Amen.

## THE HOLY HOUR

The custom of spending an hour with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament arose from the desire of devout souls to give an affirmative answer to the sorrowful question of the Saviour in Gethsemane,

“Could ye not watch with me one hour?” The devotion is usually observed on Thursday evenings or Fridays, because it was at this time of the week that our Lord suffered his agony in the Garden and it has become especially identified with the first Friday of the month. No special form of prayer has ever been prescribed for this exercise; and the time is spent in quiet colloquy with Jesus, the saying of litanies, hymns, and other acts of devotion. Two schemes of prayer are given here. Either of them is also suited to any time of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, or during a watch before the Altar of Repose on Maundy Thursday.

### HOLY HOUR I

*Read the story of the Agony of Jesus in the Garden.*

Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then said he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my

Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy. And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.

### I. God's Presence with Me and before Me

*“Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane.”*

God is everywhere.

There is no spot in heaven or in earth where he is not present.

From the first moment of my existence to the present moment, I have been in God's presence. Everywhere. At all times.

Often I forget this truth.

Often I go on in the actions of life without a thought of God.

But here today I will remember that I am in the presence of God.

*Psalm 139:1-16*

O LORD, thou hast searched me out, and known me. \* Thou knowest my downsitting and mine up-rising; thou understandest my thoughts long before.

2. Thou art about my path, and about my bed; \* and art acquainted with all my ways.

3. For lo, there is not a word in my tongue, \* but thou, O Lord, knowest it altogether.

4. Thou hast beset me behind and before, \* and laid thine hand upon me.

5. Such knowledge is too wonderful and excellent for me; \* I cannot attain unto it.

6. Whither shall I go then from. thy Spirit? \* or whither shall I go then from thy presence?

7. If I climb up into heaven, thou art there; \* if I go down to hell, thou art there also.

8. If I take the wings of the morning, \* and remain in the uttermost parts of the sea;

9. Even there also shall thy hand lead me, \* and thy right hand shall hold me.

10. If I say, Peradventure the darkness shall cover me \* then shall my night be turned to day.

11. Yea, the darkness is no. darkness with thee, but the night is as clear as the day; \* the darkness and light to thee are both alike.

12. For my reins are thine; \* thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.

13. I will give thanks unto thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: \* marvelous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well.

14. My bones are not hid from thee, \* though I be made secretly, and fashioned beneath in the earth.

15. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; \* and in thy book were all my members written;

16. Which day by day were fashioned, \* when as yet there was none of them.

God is before me here on the altar in a very definite and special way. God is here under a visible form.

It is very hard for me to realize God's presence because I cannot see him.

And God longs to have me know his presence, because he loves me.

Once, long ago, God became Man and men could see God with their eyes:

A Baby lying in the manger;

A Lad standing in the Temple;



A Man in the Garden of Gethsemane.

When men saw Jesus, they saw God in the form of Man.

But Jesus has ascended into heaven and I cannot see him as could men of old. Today, however, he comes to the altar in another form—the form of bread. Beneath this common element of bread is hidden all the splendours of the glorified Manhood of Jesus as well as all the glories of his Godhead.

Jesus, all he is today, glorified and enthroned in heaven, is before me here on the altar.

He reigns here before me:

My Jesus, my Saviour, my Lord, my God.

I cannot understand how this can be.

No one can understand this mighty mystery

But I believe:

“Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief!”

Dear Jesus, I believe that you are my God who made me;

who has given me everything;

who loves me as no one else will ever love me;

who alone can understand completely the secrets of my heart.

*I Believe that you are here*

because you love me and could not leave me alone on earth;

because you know my miseries,

and wish me to be able always to find here the Heart of a · true Friend, a Heart that will answer the longings of my own heart.

*I Believe that you are here*

to help me attain the happiness of heaven;

to find in your presence · the solace of which I stand in need;

to purify me in your Precious Blood;

to nourish me with your life in Holy Communion.

*Therefore, my Jesus, I adore thee!*

JESUS, my Lord, my God, my all,

How can I love thee as I ought?

And how revere this wondrous gift,

So far surpassing hope or thought?

Jesus, my Lord, I thee adore,  
O make me love thee more and more.

Had I but Mary's sinless heart  
To love thee with, my dearest King,  
O, with what bursts of fervent praise  
Thy goodness, Jesus, would I sing!  
Jesus, my Lord, I thee adore,  
O make me love thee more and more.

O see! within a creature's hand  
The vast Creator deigns to be,  
Reposing infant-like, as though  
On Joseph's arm or Mary's knee.  
Jesus, my Lord, I thee adore,  
O make me love thee more and more.

Thy Body, Soul, and Godhead, all!  
O mystery of love divine!  
I cannot compass all I have,  
For all thou hast and art are mine.  
Jesus, my Lord, I thee adore,  
O make me love thee more and more.

Sound, sound his praises higher still,  
And come, ye angels, to our aid,  
'Tis God! 'tis God! the very God,  
Whose power both man and angels made!  
Jesus, my Lord, I thee adore,  
O make me love thee more and more.

## II. My Sins

*“Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation.”*

I look at Jesus prostrate in agony in the moonlit Garden. Why this intensity of suffering?

Because he is feeling the weight of human sin. In the Upper Room a few moments ago, he made himself the Victim of sin and offered his life to pay the price of man's sin, saying, “This is my blood ... which is shed ... for the remission of sins.” Now, in the Garden, he who is absolutely sinless, feels the weight of the sins he has taken upon himself. Sin closes in upon him, every sin ever committed by every man, woman and child; every sin which shall ever be committed to the end of time. All sin is assumed by Jesus, the All-holy. I try to think what that means: Every sin ... Ever committed ... By anyone ... From the beginning of the world until its end ... All descending upon this one Person who must bear every single sin, great or small. And as I hear him cry out in horror, I realize that my own sins are part of this fearful burden. Jesus is feeling the weight of the sins that I myself have committed. I have a part in the sin which causes this dreadful agony of Jesus in the Garden!

Jesus knows my sins all too well. Do I know them? All of them? As I watch Jesus here, I begin to realize dimly how dreadful my sins are. I, too, begin to feel something of their weight. So I stop here awhile and look into my heart to discover my sins in order that I may express my sorrow, in order that I may confess them, one by one, to Jesus.

O BLESSED JESUS

who hast given to me the picture of the true human life,

and who dost reveal to me the ugliness of human sin:

give me the grace to see

my sins,

my shortcomings,

my negligences

which so burden thee in Gethsemane,

that I may confess them

with that sorrow which I must have if

thy Cross and Passion are to save me

from the hell which I deserve. Amen.

*Here spend some time in self-examination.*

...AND THIS, DEAR JESUS, IS WHAT I REALLY AM:

So weak, so disfigured, so soiled, so unclean!

What a plight to be in!

Yet, O My Saviour, it is just because I see  
my misery,  
just because I see how much I have hurt you,  
just because I see how loathsome these  
sins are to you that I am urged onward  
by the necessity of remaining in your presence.  
For you are my very life,  
Without you, I am surely lost.

Certainly, I have proved myself an ungrateful friend.

How many times you have filled me with joy in Holy Communion and I?— I have gone away from you  
and satisfied my desires and whims with poisonous fruit.

How many times have you enfolded me in the arms of love—and I?  
I gave you the kiss of Judas.

Still, despite my sins, I feel the need of being with you.

For, without you, life is nothing but a heavy burden.

What would life be if I were forced to wander forever among the lost?

What happiness could I expect from Satan?

what rest? what comfort? what peace?

I cannot face either life or death apart from you.

It was your lips which spoke the words, "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee."  
It was you who said to the penitent Magdalene, "Thy faith hath saved thee, Go in peace."  
So I trust in your love and mercy.

Even though I had committed these sins, you drew me here to yourself.

You offered me a place here as a worshipper.

So I am here.

I cannot offer you anything to make up for my sins;

I have nothing of my own with which to pay for my violations of your love;

But I confess my unworthiness, acknowledge my faithlessnesses with real sorrow,

Throwing myself upon your love and mercy.

JESUS, MY JESUS

I am sorry.

I beg your pardon.

I reach out suppliant beggar's hands.

JESUS, MY JESUS

Wash me in your Precious Blood,

Smile upon me again,

That I may be able to go on in life and face

death with confidence.

### **III. Intercessions**

*"Thy will be done."*

I look again at Jesus prostrated in agony in the moonlight. I have realized that the hideousness of sin is the reason for this suffering. I have tried to face my own part in his agony and to be sorry for my own sins. Now I can go a step further. Jesus suffers because he is feeling the results of sin. Sin always means suffering. As I stay here with Jesus, I can see that the agonies of the world today are the direct results of man's violation of God's holy will. Sin upsets God's plan for man's peace and happiness and brings

strife and pain to the innocent as well as to the guilty. So I will turn my energies to the work of praying for others. I will think of each subject and lift it up to God, asking him to accept Jesus' suffering for sin and to accomplish his will in that situation or concerning that person. Then I know all will be well. So I pray for:

The World and the Peoples of the World.

My Country, its officials, people and institutions.

Christianity throughout the world—Catholic and Protestant.

My own part of the Catholic Church.

My own parish.

Those near and dear to me.

My enemies and those whom I naturally dislike.

The departed.

Now I gather up all of my intercessions into the following:

### *Act of Consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus*

MOST sweet Jesus, Redeemer of the human race, look down upon me humbly prostrate before thine altar. I am thine and thine I wish to be; but to be more surely united to thee, behold, I hereby freely consecrate myself today to thy Most Sacred Heart.

Many indeed have never known thee; many, too, despising thy laws, have rejected thee. Have mercy on them all, most merciful Jesus, and draw them to thy Sacred Heart. Be thou King, O Lord, not only of the faithful who have never forsaken thee, but also of the prodigal children who have abandoned thee. Grant that they may quickly return to their Father's house lest they die of wretchedness and hunger.

Be thou King of those who are deceived by erroneous opinions or whom discord keeps away from thy Church and call them back to the harbour of truth and unity of faith, so that soon there may be but one flock and one Shepherd.

Be thou King of all those who, throughout the world, are still worshippers of any sort of idols and refuse not to draw them all into the light and kingdom of God.

Grant, O Lord, to thy Church assurance of freedom and immunity from harm; give peace and order to all nations, and make the whole earth resound from pole to pole with one glad cry: Praise to the Sacred Heart that wrought our salvation, to that Heart be glory and honour, for ever and ever. Amen.

#### **IV. For Myself**

*“He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee.”*

Jesus graciously invites men to be with him in his Agony in order that he may bless them. He has invited me to be with him. What blessings would I seek from him for myself?

First I ask him for my spiritual needs:

For light and grace to live faithfully in accordance with the will of my heavenly Father;

to develop in his love and in his service;

to grow more and more like him;

to meet the temptations and difficulties of life;

to persevere in the Christian life to the end;

And for the grace to die a good and happy death.

Then I ask him for any earthly gifts which I may desire. Here I must be willing to go without any of these things if God does not want me to have it, because I trust the wisdom and the love of my heavenly Father. All through my petitions for myself and for others must run that thread of submission to the Father’s will expressed by Jesus in the Garden in the words, “Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.”

Yet, as a child brings his requests to an earthly Father, so I now bring my requests to Jesus .....

#### **V. Closing Devotions**

*“Arise, let us be going.”*

My watch with Jesus draws to a close. I have spent this time with him in the work of adoration, penitence, intercession and petition. Now I must go back into my daily life again. The world into which I go will be the same as when I came here an hour ago. I shall have the same problems to face, the same circumstances in which to live. But I, who live in these circumstances and face these problems, am not the same. For I have been here with Jesus. I have opened my heart to him. I have placed my problems at his feet in the Garden. I am taking out into the world a new strength, a new power. Jesus goes out into the world with me, in my heart.

And before I go, I stop a moment and consider. In what particular thing is my life going to be different because I have been here in the Garden with Jesus? Just where am I going to act differently in regard to my particular circumstances in the world? I will make one special, very definite, resolution about my life before I go .....

Now I once more bow in adoration.

Dear Saviour, I have now only a few moments of my watch left.

Here before you in your sacred presence in the Blessed Sacrament,

I humble myself,

I bow low in adoration.

O Jesus, you are God.

And I? What am I?

Without you I am nothing;

yes, less than nothing

because I have so often hurt you by my sins.

Yet with you I am greater than an angel, for the Blessed Sacrament was not instituted for angels;

they can neither eat your Flesh nor drink your Blood.

Wherefore, dear Saviour, miserable as I am, I bow low before you,

Profoundly I adore you,

All my greatness comes from you,

And I prostrate myself before you.

My Jesus, I am but a handful of dust

Yet you have made me a mighty thing.

You have made me able to worship at your throne

both here and in eternity.

To adore you is the mightiest act a creature can perform

and I adore you.

I adore you who are holiness itself

You are the Source of all holiness,

Without you there is nothing in life but emptiness, pain, fear, hopeless weariness.

I adore you because you are the mighty

Lord of all things,

the Sovereign Master of the universe;



all creatures in heaven and on earth are dependent upon you.

I adore you because you dwell in inaccessible heights  
yet you come in so humble a form  
that I may look upon the veils of your presence here  
unafraid, with confidence, in intimate love.

You are God. Eternal, Infinite. Everywhere present. All-knowing. Almighty. All-wise. Holiness itself. Infinitely good. Most faithful. The perfection of bliss. Life itself.

Eternal Love.

Yet despite all this, you have humbled  
yourself  
to the littleness,  
the frailty,  
the silence  
of the Sacred Host.

Is there a place or a position of lowliness in the whole universe that you have not already taken?

Though it is impossible for me to abase  
myself as much as you,

Yet I can at least wish to humble myself  
in imitation of you,

I can at least try to forget myself and be  
winning to bear my cross daily

And I beg you, dear Jesus, help me to do  
these things.

So, dear Saviour, I must go,  
leaving your sacred sacramental presence;  
but I pray you, enter into my heart,  
so that, going, I leave you not behind,  
so that, going . back into the world, you  
may go with me.

And one final prayer I make, My Jesus:  
When I must face my last agony and enter  
death,  
When I must stand before your dreadful  
judgment seat,  
When I must see you as you really are,  
All the glories of your Godhead and  
Manhood revealed in glistening light:  
I beg that you will remember then, O  
Jesus,  
that I knelt here today in adoration of  
you, hidden beneath this outward sign;  
that I watched with you in your human  
Agony;  
that, although I could not see you with  
my outward eyes, still I did not deny  
your presence,  
but rather hailed you present here in  
the Sacred Host.  
And, in that dread hour of my agony arid  
death, dear Jesus,  
Remembering all this,  
Take me to yourself,  
For ever and ever. Amen.

~

## **HOLY HOUR II**

### **Preparatory Prayers**

O ADORABLE Saviour, present in the most Holy Sacrament of the altar, look down with tender compassion from thy throne in heaven upon me kneeling here to do thee honour and to spend one hour in thy holy company. I desire to watch with thee, and by the love of my poor heart, to make some slight reparation for all the coldness and indifference of those who neglect to serve thee. I offer thee, moreover, this hour of prayer and reparation for the triumph of the Church, for the conversion of souls

and of all nations, and for every other, intention for which thou didst pray, endure thine

Agony and bloody sweat, and accept thy Cross and Passion.

O Angel of the Agony, who didst strengthen the Lord in the Garden, strengthen me, that I may fulfill God's holy will on earth.

Come to my aid, ye saints of God, and thou, O Virgin Mother, help me to adore and worship Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost: As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever will be, world without end. Amen.

AND he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you; this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you. But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table.

—St. Luke 22: 19-21.

## **I. Adoration**

*“This is my Body. This is my Blood.”*

I kneel here in the Upper Room and hear Jesus say these words. It is the first time human ears have ever heard them. They are words of the eternal Son of God, spoken with human lips. The words of God are words of power. They bring to pass what they declare. At creation God said, Let there be light, and there was light. So now God says, This is my Body, and it is his body.

What Jesus did by means of his physical body on that holy night, he does today by means of his mystical body, the Catholic Church. The priest at the altar is a specialized member of that body through which Christ operates on earth today. It is still Christ who speaks words of power. As these words are spoken at the altar, once more bread and wine become what Christ declares them to be, his Body and Blood: And where his Body and Blood are, there is Jesus himself, his ever-glorious Divinity and his risen, ascended Humanity. What a stupendous thing is the mystery of the altar wherein God himself dwells on earth in visible form! If I were brought face to face with Jesus as he really is at this moment, the

terrible brightness would consume me. If he were to come to this earth in all his glory, I would flee from him in terror, lest I be burned to nothingness from the seeing. So he mercifully throws a veil over this glistening brightness, a veil of bread. And I can gaze on that veil, knowing that the glory is there, though hidden from my eyes. This is the evidence of his love. He does not come as a stern Judge or a God outraged by my unfaithfulnesses. He comes as a Friend whose Heart longs for me and my companionship. His delights are to be with the sons of men. His joy is to have me come to him, to speak with him, to talk to him of my wants and troubles, my hopes and fears, my longings and desires, all that is in my heart. And as I kneel here at his feet, the Holy Ghost, who proceeds from him, meets my cold heart and increases my faith and love.

So, kneeling here in the presence of Jesus on the altar, I pour out my heart in adoration and worship to him who, by the word of power, dwells on earth under this lowly form.

O MOST adorable Jesus, whom thy own infinite love induces to dwell among us, thy unworthy servants, in the adorable Sacrament of the altar, receive, I beseech thee, my profound adoration. I firmly believe that thou art really present in the Holy Sacrament, as powerful, as lovable, and as adorable as thou art in heaven. Thou hast mercifully hidden the splendour of thy majesty, lest it should deter us from approaching thy sanctuary. I believe thou dwellest on our altars not only to receive our adoration, but to listen to our petitions, to remedy our evils, to be the strength and nourishment of our souls, our powerful helper, our refuge, and our sacrifice. I hope in that boundless mercy which detains thee among us, poor weak sinners. I love that infinite goodness which induces thee to communicate thyself so liberally and so wonderfully to thy creatures.

I thank thee for so convincing a proof of thy love, and ardently wish that I could worthily acknowledge all the blessings I have ever received from this fountain of mercy. O my Jesus, I adore thee.

THEE we adore, O hidden Saviour, thee, Who in thy Sacrament art pleased to be; Both flesh and spirit in thy presence fail, Yet here thy Presence we devoutly hail.

O blest Memorial of our dying Lord,  
Who living Bread to men doth here afford!  
O may our souls for ever feed on thee,  
And thou, O Christ, for ever precious be.  
Fountain of goodness, Jesu, Lord and God,  
Cleanse us, unclean, with thy most cleansing Blood;  
Increase our faith and love, that we may know  
The hope and peace which from thy Presence flow.

O Christ, whom now beneath a veil we see, May what we thirst for soon our portion be, To gaze on thee unveiled, and see thy face, The vision of thy glory and thy grace. ·

## II. Thanksgiving

*“Take, Eat.”*

As I kneel here in the Upper Room on the first Maundy Thursday night, I am watching the first administration of Holy Communion in history. First has come the transformation of the bread and wine by the word of power from the human lips of God. Then comes the reception of these transformed things by the Apostles. And I realize that what is happening here is duplicated daily at thousands of altars throughout the world. For Jesus comes to earth under this lowly form not only to be with us, not only that we may come to him in all simplicity and intimacy to open our hearts to him as he opens his Sacred Heart to us. He comes also that he may enter our very heart of hearts and bring all his glorious, risen life and vitality into our loved by that mysterious process called Holy Communion.

I ponder what happens at the altar when Christ again speaks those words of power through the lips of his priest. The bread and wine are transformed into Christ as he is today—God the Son, the Second Person of the Eternal Trinity, who took unto himself human nature, who rose in victory over sin, pain, and death, who ascended into heaven where he reigns in triumphant glory. This is the Jesus who comes to the altar in such humble guise. In the Sacred Host resides all the vitality of the Victorious Christ. And this is what we receive into ourselves in Holy Communion.

Christianity is not a religion which merely lays upon me, a weak human being, the hopeless task of living an impossibly good life helped only by the example of a Man who lived a perfect human life two thousand years ago. Christianity is, rather, a relationship to God whereby he communicates to us his own strength and vitality which enable us to live life on a higher plane. We reproduce, in terms of our everyday life, the life of Jesus, enabled by his victory, poured into our hearts. In Holy Communion I receive from Jesus nothing less than himself, all he is and all he has.

So I kneel here before the Blessed Sacrament, that which yesterday was bread, but is now, by the word of power, transformed into Jesus himself. It is Jesus who has so humbly accommodated himself to my needs. And the gratitude which rises in my heart, flows from my lips in fervent thanksgiving.

MY dear Jesus, I thank thee with all my heart for the wonderful gift of Holy Communion whereby thou dost come to me and nourish my soul with thyself. I thank thee for all the graces and blessings I have received through the merits of thy sacred Passion and through the institution of this most holy Sacrament of the altar. With the help of thy grace I will endeavour to manifest my gratitude to thee by greater devotion to thee in the Sacrament of thy love, by obedience to thy holy commandments; by fidelity to my duties, by kindness to my neighbour, and by an earnest endeavour to become more like to thee in my daily conduct.

Dear Jesus, I thank thee.

SWEET Sacrament Divine!  
Hid in thine earthly home,  
Lo round thy lowly shrine  
With suppliant hearts we come.  
Jesus, to thee our voice we raise,  
In songs of love and heartfelt praise,  
Sweet Sacrament Divine!

Sweet Sacrament of Peace!  
Dear home for every heart;  
Here restless yearnings cease  
And sorrows all depart;  
Here in thine ear all trustfully  
We tell our tale of misery,  
Sweet Sacrament of Peace!

Sweet Sacrament of Rest!  
Ark from the ocean's roar,  
Within thy shelter blest  
Soon may we reach the shore:  
Save us, for still the tempest raves,  
Save, lest we sink beneath the waves,  
Sweet Sacrament of Rest!

Sweet Sacrament Divine!  
Earth's light and jubilee,  
In thy far depths doth shine  
Thy Godhead's Majesty;  
Sweet light, so shine on us we pray,  
That earthly joys may fade away,  
Sweet Sacrament Divine.

### III. Reparation

All is not pure joy on this occasion of the first Holy Communion in history. For among those gathered with Jesus is one who has betrayed him to his enemies, the traitor Judas. He is here with the rest, pretending deep devotion, acting as though he had never violated the love and trust of the Master. And what pathos there is in the way Jesus treats Judas! Although he knows what Judas has done, Jesus does not lift his voice in wrathful condemnation, nor does he withdraw himself from Judas. The depth of his love puts him in a position of being entirely at the disposal of his loved ones, and if Judas persists in violating that love, Jesus will suffer it.

This element of the events in the Upper Room is still part of the mystery of the altar today. Certainly the voices of those outside the Church are heard raised in wrathful denial of Jesus' presence on the altar and this is an element in the insults suffered by God's love. Certainly, too, others outside the Church have never really heard the revelation of this precious truth and the Sacred Heart yearns to let these souls know of his presence which so reveals the depths of his love. But far more grievous to the Heart of Jesus, is the betrayal of those who have been privileged to know something of the love of Jesus manifested in the Holy Sacrament. How often men betray him, sell him for the equivalent of thirty pieces of silver in a moment of pleasure, in giving in to some emotion, in the satisfaction of some unruly instinct! And then how often, without a word of penitence or sorrow, they appear at this feast, sometimes even going through the motions of making their Communions.

Yet, in spite of these things, in spite of the antagonism of enemies, the indifference to truth of the ignorant, the betrayal of friends, our meek and gentle Saviour does not withdraw his presence from our midst. His love is so deep that it puts him at man's disposal. Betrayed, denied, insulted, ignored, yet he is on the altar, reigning, our King, our Lord, our God.

As I think upon these unpleasant facts, does not a desire rise in my heart to do something to make up for them? What can I do? I can give special care to my preparation before, and my thanksgiving after, Holy Communion. I can be especially constant in honouring Jesus on the altar by my thoughts and my words about this Sacrament. I can make a particular effort to be faithful in making visits to him in this sacrament, being with him sometimes in those long hours when he has no worshippers before the tabernacle. This is what is meant by the word "reparation," making up just a bit by added devotion for the neglect and insults endured by Jesus. What a privilege it is to be able to be a special agent of reparation, whose duty it is not only to make our Sacramental Friend known and loved, but also to make up just a bit for the neglect and insults of others.

O MY dear Jesus, loving Saviour, who by thy excessive love hast willed to abide with us in the Sacrament of the altar, I acknowledge thee as my Sovereign Lord and my God and therein I adore thee with deepest humility. I thank thee with all my heart for the infinite tenderness thou dost there show us in spite of the offences that we offer thee. Penetrated with sorrow at the sight of our ingratitude, I come, O God of Majesty, to offer reparation for all the sacrileges, profanations and impiety that have ever been committed against thee in this adorable Sacrament. Forget, O Lord, our iniquities and remember only thy mercies. Accept my sincere desire to see thee honoured in this Sacrament of thy love. I long with

all my heart to honour, love, bless, praise, and adore thee as much as the saints and angels love, bless, and adore thee. I beseech thee to grant me the grace so to adore and worthily receive thee, that after my death I may, with all the blessed, glorify thee in heaven throughout eternity. Amen.

Jesus, in thy dear Sacrament,  
Thy Cross I cannot see,  
But the Crucified is offer'd there,  
And he was slain for me.

Jesus, in thy dear Sacrament,  
Thy Flesh I cannot see,  
But that Flesh is given to be our food,  
And it was scourged for me.

Jesus, in thy dear Sacrament;  
Thy Blood I cannot see,  
But the Chalice glows with those red drops,  
On Calv'ry shed for me.

Jesus, in thy dear Sacrament,  
Thy Face I cannot see,  
But angels there behold the brow  
Thorn-crown'd for love of me.

Jesus, my Maker and my God,  
Thy Godhead none may see,  
But thou art present, God and Man,  
In thy Sacrament with me.



#### **IV. Petition and Conclusion**

I have knelt here with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament as in the Upper Room, and offered my adoration, my gratitude and my reparation. Now, remembering the universal love of the Sacred Heart, I unite myself to Jesus and lift up my heart in prayer for others and for myself.

I BESEECH thee, dear Lord Jesus, to have compassion upon me; inflame my heart with ardent love and zeal for thine honour and glory; make me through thy grace always so to believe and understand, to feel and firmly hold, to speak and think of the exceeding mystery of this Blessed Sacrament, as shall be well pleasing to thee and profitable to my own soul; may thy Priests continually offer the Holy Sacrifice in the beauty of holiness, and thy people more and more with delight through thine altars; and grant unto us all, that, worthily adoring and receiving thee upon earth, we may finally by thy mercy be admitted to the heavenly banquet, where thou, the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne, in unveiled majesty, art perfectly worshipped and glorified by countless angels and saints for ever and ever. Amen.

O MY Lord Jesus Christ, King of eternal glory, restorer of all things in heaven and on earth, supreme and omnipotent, who with infinite wisdom dost reunite at thy feet things scattered and dispersed; enlighten the rulers of nations; instill thy spirit into all civil institutions, into every form of government, into laws and armies; grant that all the powers of the earth may recognize in thee the majesty of the eternal God, the source from which all authority is derived; illuminate the nations that they may understand that thou art the origin of rights and duties, that it is through thee that the rulers of the earth rule, and that it is to thee that rulers and people alike owe obedience. Who livest and reignest, world without end. Amen.

GOOD Jesu, Physician of souls and bodies, make all sickness a healing medicine to the soul; soothe by thy presence each ache and pain; hallow all suffering by thine all-holy sufferings; and teach all sufferers to unite their sufferings with thine, to be hallowed by thine. Hear us, O Lord, and have mercy upon us. Amen.

O DEAREST Jesus, whose loving Heart was ever touched by the sorrows of others, have mercy upon the souls of the faithful departed, and grant them a place of refreshing, light and peace whence pain and sorrow and sighing are driven away; and in thy goodness and mercy pardon every sin committed by them in thought, word and deed; thou who art the Resurrection and the Life, and who livest and reignest, world without end. Amen.

O JESU Lord, remember  
When thou shalt come again  
Upon the clouds of heaven,  
With all thy shining train;  
When ev'ry eye shall see thee  
In Deity revealed,  
Who now upon this altar  
In silence art conceal' d:

Remember then, O Saviour,  
I supplicate of thee,  
That here I bow'd before thee  
Upon my bended knee;  
That here I own'd thy Presence,  
And did not thee deny;  
And glorified thy greatness  
Though hid from human eye.

Accept, Divine Redeemer,  
The homage of my praise;  
Be thou the Light and Honour  
And Glory of my days:  
Be thou my Consolation  
When death is drawing nigh;  
Be thou my only Treasure.  
Through all Eternity.

BLESSED, praised, worshipped and adored be Jesus Christ on his throne of glory in heaven, and in the most Holy Sacrament of the Altar. Amen.

## **EASTER TRIDUUM OF THE PASSION AND RESURRECTION OF THE LORD**

### **HOLY THURSDAY**

#### **Evening Prayer**

Evening Prayer is said only by those who do not participate in the evening Mass of the Lord's Supper.

Ant. 1 Jesus Christ, the firstborn from the dead and ruler of the kings of the earth, has made us a royal people to serve his God and Father.

Psalms and canticle from Thursday, Week II, 830.

Ant. 2 The Lord will be the champion of the helpless; he will free the poor from the grip of the powerful.

Ant. 3 The saints won their victory over death through the blood of the Lamb and the truth to which they bore witness.

#### **READING**

Hebrews 13: 12-15

Jesus died outside the gate, to sanctify the people by his own blood. Let us go out to him outside the camp, bearing the insult which he bore. For here we have no lasting city; we are seeking one which is to come. Through him let us continually offer God a sacrifice praise, that is, the fruit of lips which acknowledge his name.

In place of the responsory the following is said:

Ant. For our sake Christ was obedient, accepting even death.

## CANTICLE OF MARY

Ant. While they were at supper, Jesus took bread, said the blessing, broke the bread and gave it to his disciples.

### Intercessions

At the Last Supper, on the night he was betrayed, our Savior entrusted to his Church the memorial of his death and resurrection to be celebrated for ever. Let us adore him, and say:

*Sanctify your people, redeemed by your blood.*

Redeemer of the world, give us a greater share of your passion through a deeper spirit of repentance,  
—so that we may share the glory of your resurrection.

May your Mother, comfort of the afflicted, protect us,  
—may we console others as you console us.

In their trials enable your faithful people to share in your passion,  
—and so reveal in their lives your saving power.

You humbled yourself by being obedient even to accepting death on a cross.  
—give all who serve you the gifts of obedience and patient endurance.

Transform the bodies of the dead to be like your own in glory,  
—and bring us at last into their fellowship.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

From *The Lord of the Forty Days*

34. Take, Eat

(Matthew 26:26-29)

*Now as they were eating,  
Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke it,  
and gave it to the disciples, and said,  
“Take, eat; this is my body.”  
And he took the cup,  
and when he had given thanks  
he gave it to them, saying,  
“Drink of it, all of you;  
for this is my blood of the covenant,  
which is poured for many  
for the forgiveness of sins.  
I tell you I shall not drink again  
of this fruit of the vine  
until that day I drink it new  
with you in my Father’s kingdom.”*

In chapels and churches,  
in villages, towns, and cities,  
in cathedrals and convents,  
in hospitals and homes,  
from sunrise to sunset,  
those words of Christ are spoken,

“Take, eat; this is my body.”  
And the life that was laid down  
lives and breathes in every soul  
that comes to his table.

The miracle and the mystery  
of the resurrected Christ  
is not theory or theological surmise,  
but a living fact,  
when the source of love takes residence  
in the hearts of those who love him.

Dear Lord,  
this body,  
this blood,  
this bread,  
this wine,  
this lover's tryst with you  
is the living heart of faith.  
From this communion  
comes love and hope.  
From this communion  
comes forgiveness and peace.  
From this communion  
comes healing and strength.  
From this communion  
comes life that never ends.

Lord,  
may I live in communion with you,  
Now and always.

35. Before the Cock Crows

(Matthew 26:34)

*Jesus said to him,  
"Truly I say to you,  
this very night,  
before the cock crows,  
you will deny me three times."*

Peter,

so like all of us;  
wanting to be heroic  
to be brave, to be good,  
to be loved,  
yet failing.

When I think of my own good intentions,  
I see resolutions that came to nothing  
and promises broken.

How many times have I determined  
to turn over a new leaf  
only to discover  
that I am not as strong as I thought,  
not as generous,  
not as fearless,  
not as loving.

For me, Peter,  
the cock crows almost every day.

Lord,  
when I have denied you  
through selfishness,  
when I have chosen  
to stand alongside those  
who persecute you,  
I have cried,  
“I do not know the man.”

Lord,  
when I have allowed  
anger to rule rather than forgiveness,  
when I have thought or spoken  
ill of another,  
my words have declared,  
“I do not know the man.”

Lord,  
when I have denied the truth,  
when I have deceived;  
kept silent in the face of lies,  
my silences have shouted,  
“I do not know the man.”

Lord,  
forgive me.  
Strengthen my resolve;  
help me grow in goodness;  
let me hear you ask,  
“Do you love me?”  
*before* the cock crows.



## 36. TAKE THIS CUP

(Matthew 26:39)

*And going a little further  
he fell on his face and prayed,  
“My Father,  
if it be possible,  
let this cup pass from me;  
nevertheless, not as I will,  
but as thou wilt.”*

Lord,  
how many times have I cried,  
“Take this cup from me.”  
How often have I prayed,  
“Save me from what lies ahead,”  
only to feel  
that my words were echoing  
in deep silence?

But the silence of the deaf  
and the silence of the listening  
are entirely different.

Father,  
you could not have been deaf  
to the cries from Gethsemane;  
nor blind  
to that staggering climb on Calvary;  
nor unmoved  
by the words, “I thirst.”

How terrifying  
is the silence of your listening!

The silence of my God  
is filled with power,  
the power of love  
so concentrated,  
so intense,  
so razor-sharp  
that sin and death are severed,  
and neither knows  
it is no longer relevant.

The power of resurrecting  
Easter love pierces history  
and explodes in glory beyond time  
with such brilliance  
that the heavens applaud  
in awestruck silence.

And in that silence,  
my cry, my ache, my sorrow  
are taken from me,  
and every pain ever felt  
is engulfed by love--  
endless, eternal, infinite love.  
Father,  
not my will,  
but your will be done.

## 37. THE SPIRIT IS WILLING

(Matthew 26:41)

*Watch and pray*

*that you may not enter into temptation;*

*the spirit indeed is willing,*

*but the flesh is weak.*

It seems as if the whole of life

is a battle

between the spirit and the flesh,

between what is temporary and passing

and what is eternal,

between reality and unreality.

Few of us are visionaries.

Most of us live with immediate things:

The things we can see and touch seem real and we cling to them for security.

Yet they are the very things which, in time, will cease to be.

The only thing that is eternal is the spirit.

Yet my flesh continues

its battle against the spirit.

My spirit is courageous,

but I play it safe.

My spirit is generous,

but I count the pennies,

My spirit is self-sacrificing,

but I'm too tired.

My spirit is gentle,  
but my mouth is hard.  
My spirit believes,  
but my ears doubt.  
My spirit is warm,  
but my eyes are cold.  
My spirit is willing, but my flesh is weak.

Lord,  
unite my spirit with yours  
so that selfishness, greed,  
envy, anger, and idleness--  
all that is unworthy and unloving,  
all that defiles and contradicts my spirit,  
all that prevents me from reaching  
the stature that was intended for me--  
may be overcome by your never-ending love,  
and I might watch,  
not one hour but eternity with you.

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