



## **Holy Thursday Adoration**

***Watch and pray (Mt 26:41)***

### **INTRODUCTION**

**Guide:** Holy Thursday is a day of gratitude and joy for the great gift of love that the Lord has made to us, by loving us to the end. Let us pray to the Lord at this hour, so that gratitude and joy may become in us the power to love together with his love.

*Lord, today you give us your life; you give us yourself. Enter deeply within us with your love. Make us live in your “today”. Make us instruments of your peace!*

### **Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament**

***(Hymn)***

**Guide:** The night that follows the Eucharistic celebration “in Coena Domini” is a night of prayer and adoration before the Eucharist.

The evening before the day of his Passion, Lord Jesus established the “efficacious sign” of his freedom as he offers himself for the salvation of the “world”.

The Eucharistic presence – the body given and the blood shed – removes every misunderstanding regarding the death of Jesus: in as much as it is an act of his freedom, it is no more a sad destiny or an unexpected fatality nor only an undesired gesture of human evil.

The time that we shall dedicate to the Eucharistic adoration is our “entry” into the prayer of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane.

*(A suitable refrain)*

*(Let us go through the account of Matthew (26:36-54)*

*to live this time of prayer together with Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane)*

**“GRIEVED AND DISTRESSED”**

**Reader 1:** *Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated. Then he said to them, “I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me.” And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want.” Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping;*

**Reader 2:** Jesus begins to feel “grieved and distressed”. He feels all the anguish at what awaits him: betrayal, contempt, suffering, failure. He is “sorrowful” and there in the abyss, in that desolation, he addresses the Father with the most tender and

gentle word: “Abba”, that is, Father (cf. Mk 14:33-36). Jesus teaches us to embrace the Father in our trials, because in praying to him, there is the strength to go forward in suffering. In times of struggle, prayer is relief, entrustment and comfort. Abandoned by all, in inner desolation, Jesus is not alone. He is with the Father... Jesus entrusts everything and all of himself to the Father, bringing to him all that he feels, leaning on him in the struggle (cf. *Pope Francis, 17 April 2019*).

*(brief silence)*

**Guide:** Lord Jesus, teach us to pray and say “Father” and to entrust ourselves to him, as you did, to his will, which is our true good. Free us from the temptation of remaining closed within ourselves, taking a painful introverted path that can only submerge us ever deeper into our lonely selves.

*(A suitable refrain)*

**“WATCH AND PRAY”**

**Reader 1:** *And he said to Peter, “So, could you not stay awake with me one hour? Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”*

**Reader 2:** Prayer is a gift of grace but it always presupposes a determined response on our part because those who pray “battle” against themselves, their surroundings, and especially the Tempter who does all he can to turn them away from prayer. The battle of prayer is inseparable from progress in the spiritual life. We pray as we live because we live as we pray (*Compendium of the Catechism no. 572*).

*(brief silence)*

**Guide:** Lord Jesus, you ask us to keep watch with you. We are unable to share your fear and sorrow and above all, we are not able to attune ourselves with your prayer. We receive with a dull spirit even the words on temptation that you addressed to us and we are incapable of understanding them. Teach us once more to pray, to pray constantly, without fleeing, without giving up or abandoning ourselves to distractions.

*(A suitable refrain)*

**“YOUR WILL BE DONE”**

**Reader 1:** *Again he went away for the second time and prayed, “My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.” Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words. Then he came to the disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.”*

**Reader 2:** The drama of Jesus’ human will appears as he faces death and evil: “remove this cup from me!” However, there is the third expression in Jesus’ prayer, and it is the crucial one, in which the human will adheres to the divine will without reserve. In fact, Jesus ends by saying forcefully: “yet not what I will but what you will” (Mk 14:36c).

Jesus lives his life in accordance with the centre of his Person: his being the Son of God.; he abandons himself totally to the Father. Thus Jesus tells us that it is only by conforming our own will to the divine one that human beings attain their true height,

that they become “divine”; only by coming out of ourselves, only in the “yes” to God, is Adam's desire — and the desire of us all — to be completely free. It is what Jesus brings about at Gethsemane: in transferring the human will into the divine will the true man is born and we are redeemed (cf. *Pope Benedict XVI, 1 Feb 2012*).

*(brief silence)*

**Guide:** Lord Jesus enable us to follow the will of God every day even if he speaks of the Cross, to live in ever greater intimacy with the you, in order to bring a little bit of God's “heaven” to this “earth”.

*(A suitable refrain)*

## **FULFILLMENT OF SCRIPTURES**

**Reader 1:** *While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; with him was a large crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him.” At once, he came up to Jesus, said, “Greetings, Rabbi!”, and kissed him. Jesus said to him, “Friend, do what you are here to do.” Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and arrested him. Suddenly, one of those with Jesus put his hand on his sword, drew it, and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear. Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the scriptures be fulfilled, which say it must happen in this way?” At that hour, Jesus said to the crowds, “Have you come out with*

*swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit? Day after day, I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. But all this has taken place, so that the scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled.” Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.*

**Reader 2:** When they come to arrest him in the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus does not call upon the right to self-defence, but tells the one who grabs the sword and believes to help him: “Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword”. Jesus’ word resounds clearly to this day. We do not defend life and good with a “sword”. It is a word addressed to the one who believes in violence, promotes it or justifies it. St. Jerome wrote that the one who says that he believes in Christ, may he too behave as Christ behaved. Christ, the Son of God [...] did not come to beat, but to be beaten; he did not insult, but bore it; he did not crucify, but was crucified, he did not kill others, but he himself suffered [...] (cf *L’Osservatore Romano*, 28 giugno 2021).

*( brief silence )*

**Guide:** Lord Jesus, teach us to become patient artisans who weave once again the communication between those in conflict, who risk themselves to unite those who are fighting, to be bridge builders who do not give into hatred. Only thus, the Scriptures can be fulfilled also today, in our time: *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God* (Mt 5:9).

*(A suitable refrain)*

*(Silent adoration follows)*