

Palm Sunday 2018
Agony in the Garden
Holy Hour

Eden and Gethsemane were two gardens around which revolved the fate of humanity.

- ✓ In Eden, Adam sinned.
- ✓ In Gethsemane, Christ took humanity's sin upon Himself.

- ✓ In Eden, Adam hid himself from God;
- ✓ In Gethsemane, Christ interceded with His Father;

- ✓ In Eden, God sought out Adam in his sin of rebellion;
- ✓ In Gethsemane, the New Adam, Christ, sought out the Father in submission and resignation.

- ✓ In Eden, a sword was drawn to prevent entrance into the garden.
- ✓ In Gethsemane, a sword would be enclosed.

That Jesus agonized over the "cup" he was about to drink is only one small reason why He agonized. To a much greater degree, Our Blessed Lord agonized what Isaiah had prophesied, that there would be laid upon Him the guilt of us all, meaning, all sin, every sin committed from the first sin in Eden to the betrayal of Judas in Gethsemane:

- ✓ The "first original sin" of the fallen angels who rebelled against God was there

- ✓ the “second original sin” of Adam was there
- ✓ the sin of Cain
- ✓ the abominations of Sodom and Gomorrah;
- ✓ the sorrow of David,
- ✓ the indignation of Elijah,
- ✓ and the tears of Jeremiah over the forgetfulness of God’s own people who fell before false gods;
- ✓ the coarseness of the pagans who defiled the natural law.

Yet His Agony did not stop there. Added to the sins of the past were the sins of the future:

- ✓ He saw the future Judases who would betray;
- ✓ the sins of heresy that would rend His Church just as they rent His garments
- ✓ the sins of Communism; the sins of terrorism
- ✓ the broken marriage vows;
- ✓ the lies,
- ✓ the slanders
- ✓ the adulteries
- ✓ the murders
- ✓ the apostasies

From north to south, east to west, the foul haze of all sin was weighted upon His shoulders.

Who could carry such weight, a weight that caused Him to sweat blood, a weight too heavy to bear? The God Man who took this agony, His agony to His Father in prayer.

And His Father in prayer showed His Son what His suffering would accomplish. From the visions of Anne Catherine Emmerich and the insights of Bishop Fulton Sheen - Our Blessed Lord saw:

- ✓ The patriarchs, the prophets, and the just men
- ✓ the parents of His Blessed Mother, Ann and Joachim
- ✓ His Father Joseph, His cousin John the Baptist
- ✓ And all the saints of antiquity, waiting to be delivered from that prison where they languished in eager hope . . .

awaiting His arrival to free them from Sheol and open for them the gates of Heaven.

Our Blessed Lord saw the:

- ✓ apostles,
- ✓ disciples,
- ✓ virgins,
- ✓ martyrs,
- ✓ confessors,
- ✓ hermits,
- ✓ popes and bishops,

- ✓ men and women religious,
- ✓ and lay faithful;

He saw the entire band of future saints who would join their labors to the merits of His Passion. He saw that they bore on their heads triumphal crowns and flowers of their crowns, in perfection, according to the difference of the sufferings, labors and victories which had earned them eternal glory. Their whole life, and all their actions, their merits and their power, as well as all the glory of their triumph, joined to Christ's passion and death, came to His mind.

And therefore His human will came to accept God's will.

“Not my will, but yours be done.”

An agony at first, but His hour long prayer strengthened him from collapsing in prayer to standing up and going to His captors.

An hour - long prayer. A holy hour.

Brothers and sisters, as you know, OFOFOF capital and building campaign will include a Eucharistic Adoration Chapel, to be located where the Baptistery is right now. Starting Sunday, June 10th, it will be available 24/7 for all of us to make a Holy Hour.

When we had our feasibility study, some responded with questions, “Who will use the Chapel?” The answer is all of us. When a parish is availed with a 24/7 Eucharistic Adoration Chapel, at least two parishioners are asked to sign up to adore Our Blessed Lord on the same day and at the same hour each week or each month. For example, my brother Tim has Perpetual Adoration in his parish at St. Bede in Holland, PA. His hour is from 8:00-9:00 p.m. every Thursday night. So Tim schedules nothing during that hour so he can make a Holy Hour with Our Blessed Lord. So that means every Thanksgiving, Tim and his family leave Thanksgiving dinner early so he can remain faithful to his Holy Hour.

What do you do for an hour? Well, it’s as simple as simply sitting, being and not doing.

A favorite scene of mine in the movie “Risen,” which is about a Roman centurion, an atheist, who is taken in by the Disciples for the days after Jesus is risen. And one night, on a mountain, it’s just Our Risen Lord and the centurion – just the two of them, alone. And the centurion says, “I don’t even know what to ask?” Neither would I. You don’t need to ask. You just need to be. Look at Jesus while Jesus looks at you.

Pray a Rosary. Read. We will have books for spiritual reading for you to use. Just be with Our Lord for one hour. You will find it is the most peaceful hour of your week. I make a holy hour before morning Mass. According to my Fitbit, my heart rate is at its lowest during Adoration. It's not by coincidence. It's by God's grace. And keep in mind that spending an hour with Jesus means Jesus spends an hour with you.

Our Blessed Lord asked Peter, James and John, "Could you not watch for one hour?" And they could only answer "No," because they slept. You might fall asleep as well. Can't think of a better place.

For perpetual adoration to become a reality, we need adorers. But right now, we need people to help organize and schedule adorers in terms of leadership, 6 hour shift captains and one hour captains. Eucharistic Adoration must be lay led. I would love to champion the army of adorers, but I simply do not have the time to devote to this. If you have been waiting for Eucharistic Adoration, if you have experienced the blessings and graces of Eucharistic Adoration, I'm asking you to be part of the leadership Eucharistic Adoration requires. After Mass, please sign up in the JRE and after Easter, I will call a first meeting.

You will notice the stained glass window in the baptistery is Our Blessed Lord being baptized by John the Baptist. What were the first words spoken by John the Baptist at the Jordan, but “Behold, the Lamb of God” the same words spoken by the priest as he offers the Eucharist to the congregation. It is fitting that we name the Chapel some form of “Lamb of God.”

The Eucharist is God on earth. Why would we not spend an hour with Him? Why would we not keep watch for an hour? If I asked you to come to Church for one hour a week and I’d give you a million dollars, the Church would be full. Why would we not come to Church to spend an hour with Jesus Christ? A million dollars vs. Jesus Christ? What or should I say Who is most important?