

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.

HAIL, Mary.

GLORY be.

The Litany of the Blessed Sacrament, p. 156.

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 ac-

knowledge 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 lives 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 deep-

est 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, O 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 throng 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; instil 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 Sac-
rament of the Altar. Amen.

