



HOLY HOUR AT THE ALTAR OF REPOSE

Make your heart — and your home — his Altar of Repose

Introduction:

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, we gather this solemn night at the Altar of Repose, to watch and pray with our Lord, who is now handed over, betrayed, and abandoned. The tabernacle stands empty in every church except this sacred place—this garden of solitude—where we accompany Jesus in His agony. Tonight is not about many words but deep presence. Like the disciples in Gethsemane, we are invited to "stay here and keep watch with Him." We want to remain, to love, to listen. Let this hour be one of intimate union with the Lord. Let us console the Heart of Jesus, pierced by the weight of our sins and the betrayal of love. In silence, in prayer, in reverence—let us keep watch.

This Holy Hour is a small response of love to Christ's call. He suffers alone so that we will never be alone in our suffering. He drinks the chalice so we may taste mercy. In His agony, Jesus carries not only the burden of the cross but the weight of every human sorrow—yours, mine, ours. Let us now offer Him the gift of our time, our attention, and our hearts. Let us not be distracted. Let us not rush away. Let us not fall asleep.

Hymn: *A hymn of adoration and worship could be sung.*

(Pause..... for some moments of personal prayer and adoration)

Prayer to Jesus in his Agony

Jesus, my Saviour,
Out of love for all people, You chose to suffer deeply in the Garden of Gethsemane.
In Your agony, You were comforted by an Angel—
Please accept the small comfort I offer You now,
Though I am unworthy.

I know my sins added to Your sorrow.
You wept and sweat blood for me.
Let my prayers unite with Yours,
My sacrifices with Yours,
For the forgiveness of my sins
And the salvation of those who are dying.

Let me stay with You in Your suffering,
Share in Your pain,
And drink the cup of sorrow with You, as the Father wills.

Holy Angel who consoled Jesus,
Help me offer Him comfort too.
Give me your strength and love,
That I may pray, suffer, and one day die with Jesus,
For love of Him. Amen.

(Pause..... for some moments of personal prayer and adoration)

Scripture Reading: Matthew 26:36–46 (Agony in the Garden) *(Silence.....)*

Reflection:

In the agony of Jesus at the Garden of Gethsemane, we see not only the Son of God but the Son of Man, trembling, sorrowful, longing for comfort, praying in anguish. He asked for a companionship: “*Stay here with me: Watch with me*” But He found slumbering friends instead of support. How often have we, too, fallen asleep—spiritually, morally, emotionally—when Christ was calling us to be near? The words of Our Divine Master, “*Could you not watch with me one hour?*” (Mt 26:40). are also addressed to each of us.

Jesus, the obedient Son who healed and raised the dead, now trembles before the cup of suffering. He does not hide His fear, but brings it to the Father with love: “*My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass... yet not as I will, but as you will*” Here, He shows us that true love is not the absence of fear, but faithfulness through it. This is our call too; to enter the world’s gardens of sorrow and not flee. To love not only when it’s easy, but when it demands our time, comfort, and plans. Love stays, even when it’s hard to keep watch. As disciples of our time, our obligation is not merely to admire Christ from a distance but to accompany Him, to remain, to keep vigil, to hold the hand of the one who suffers, and to whisper with our lives: “*You are not alone*” This is the true mark of discipleship: love that stays.

There is grace in the Garden. Though overwhelmed, Christ rises from prayer, strengthened—not because the suffering is gone, but because He is united to the Father’s will. Grace doesn’t always remove the pain; it gives us strength to endure. Our own garden moments of fear and pain are not signs of God’s absence but sacred places where grace quietly enters. When we kneel trembling, we are not alone—Christ has been there, and kneels with us still.

(Pause..... for Silent Self-examination of conscience in the light of the Gospel)

Hymn: *An appropriate hymn could be sung.*

General Intercessions:

Leader: Let us now offer prayers for the Church and for the world as we keep watch with the Lord.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

For the Church throughout the world, suffering with her Lord in persecution, misunderstanding, and rejection; that they may find spiritual strength and joyful endurance. **We pray,**

For the Holy Father, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, and Lay leaders who shepherd God’s people through the challenging times. **We pray,**

For those betrayed by friends, abandoned by family, or weighed down by sorrow that they may have inner peace coming from being steadfast in their love and faith. **We pray,**

For those struggling to accept the cup of suffering in illness, grief, addiction, or despair. We especially pray for the Christians who would spend this Holy Week and Easter in the Prisons, Relief camps, Refugee camps away from their homes and loved ones. **We pray,**

We pray for those preparing for the newness of life in the risen Lord, through the Sacrament of Baptism in our Parish and throughout the world this Easter. **We pray,**

For ourselves, that we may have the grace to remain faithful to Jesus in loving surrender throughout our life. **We pray,**

(Brief moments of Silence.....)

Concluding Prayer:

Jesus, you knew the bitterness of betrayal and the loneliness of the night.
Be with all who suffer this night.
Teach us to pray, to watch, and to love with You.
Lord Jesus Christ, as your disciples for our own time,
we have come to stay with You,
Pardon us for the times we ignore your plea to stay close.
Accept this vigil of love from hearts that desire to be faithful.
Bind us to You in Your Passion and resurrection.
May Your agony of the cross be fruitful in us.
And when the hour is darkest,
let us always find light in You our only Light.
You live and reign forever and ever. **Amen.**

Hymn: *Concluding hymn may be sung, if necessary.*

✠ Silent Departure

Let all depart in reverent silence, carrying the weight of the Lord's love into the rest of the night.

-Commission for Liturgy
Archdiocese of Bombay.
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