

*What's All This Talk About "Adoration" and the "Blessed Sacrament"
I Am Hearing About?*

Part 5 – The "raison d'être"

The *raison d'être* for Eucharistic Adoration is found in *Matthew* 26:40, "So, could you not keep watch with Me one hour? (cf *Mk* 14:37). When the Lord Jesus was at the Garden of Gethesemane the night before He died, He took with three closest Apostles with Him—Sts Peter, James, and John, and asked them to remain close while He went off to pray a short distance hence (*Mt* 26:36-37). Jesus said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; *remain here, and watch*" (*Mt* 26:38). Jesus was invited His closest Apostles to keep vigil with Him in prayer during this difficult moment.

The Church's spiritual Tradition has always understood this story to be a paradigm of the necessity of prayer; the Church has also applied this Biblical imperative to Eucharistic Adoration, whereby we spend an hour with Jesus in prayer before Him in the Blessed Sacrament. The question that Jesus addressed to Sts Peter, James, and John are addressed to *us* as well: "could you not keep watch with Me *one hour*?" It is for this reason that the hour spent before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is called **Holy Hour**.

We know that Christians are *expected* to pray. Jesus said "Pray always!" (*Lk* 18:1; cf 1 *Thess* 5:17). The way of 'doing' Church is found in *Acts* 4:42, "And they devoted themselves to the Apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the Breaking of Bread, and *the prayers*." But, if Jesus is "really, truly, and substantially Present" in the Most Blessed Sacrament, what excuse have we got *not* to go before Him in the tabernacle or in the monstrance to pray?

The Wise Men found the child Jesus with Mary, "they fell down and worshiped Him" (*Mt* 2:11). Just before his Ascension, His disciples "saw Him and worshiped Him" (*Mt* 28:17). In *John* 5:23, Jesus spoke of Himself thus: "...that all may honour the Son, *even as they honour the Father*." We know that Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is indeed the "Lamb of God," as we also sing at Mass. In the *Apocalypse* of St John, this Eucharistic Lamb is shown being worshipped: "Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the presbyters the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, 'Worthy is *the Lamb* who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honour and glory and blessing!' And I heard every creature in heaven *and on earth* and under the earth and in the sea, and all therein, saying, 'To Him who sits upon the throne and *to the Lamb* be blessing and honour and glory and might for ever and ever!'" (5:11-13).

This same Jesus who is before the Father in heaven interceding for our salvation is the same Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. So "[l]et us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (*Heb* 4:16).