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Dear brothers and sisters in the faith, peace be to you from Gethsemane.

This month we are proposing you to watch over this mystery that happens here at Gethsemane: the Lord acts and saves humanity quietly… even when the disciples (and us!) sleep! (Mt 26.43). God acts precisely contrary to the logic of the world. This is the case in the history of the world… and, in the same way, in our personal history. Let us pray, thank, intercede and contemplate this wonderful mystery.
In his anguish he prayed even more earnestly, and his sweat fell to the ground like great drops of blood (Luke 22, 44). On July 1st, HERE in the Basilica of Gethsemane is the feast of the Precious Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ. The Sacred Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation, makes many references to the blood, in which God, the Creator and Author of life, is fully involved and present. Our prayer, in this month of July, focuses even more on the Rock that welcomed the drops of the Precious Blood of the Lord that fell HERE. It is the blood of God made flesh, the blood of the covenant, the blood of the innocent Lamb delivered for us. If through the ‘shedding’ of the blood of Abel humankind turns away from God, through the ‘shedding’ of the blood of the innocent Lamb humanity is redeemed and carried back home. We look with eyes of faith every drop of blood that still today falls into the earth and reaches and is picked up by the Lord. In past, at present, in silence or noise, how many innocent lives are delivered with blood and united to the redemptive sacrifice of Christ! With full consciousness or in a fast and sharp moment, they reach the Eternal, who knows everything and welcomes them in his infinite Wisdom, which goes beyond our limited mind… nothing is lost! Let us pray, give thanks, praise, repair and intercede before the Lord, who unceasingly leans toward us, wiping every tear and collecting every drop of blood shed.
These days we have prayed with more intensity with the words of Psalm 121: “And now our feet are standing within your gates O Jerusalem!”

Prayer is and will remain our only real strength. Before strife and protests we really believe that without Jesus Christ man can do nothing (cfr John 15,5). However, we cannot think that all nations know the Lord and that, therefore, they must convert to Catholicism because Salvation comes through Jesus Christ and the Cross!

Although this will happen… it won’t be because of our merits or those of the Church, but because God in his mysterious power is capable of making that every human conscience pass through the Paschal Mystery of Jesus (cfr Redemptoris Missio 10, Pope st. John Paul II).

Let us pray and contemplate so that his divine will be fulfilled.
THE ACTION THAT REDEEMS

September 2017

VIGILANTES CUM CHRISTO
APPARUIT AUTEM ILLI ANGELUS DE COELO CONFORTANS EUM

THE ACTION THAT REDEEMS

“Abbà! Father! Everything is possible for you…” (Mark 14, 36)

Each day we, who safeguard this Holy Place, have the great gift of being able to kiss the Rock that has "heard" this prayer of Jesus: "Abbà! Father! Everything is possible for you..."

Nowadays, more than ever, in these our times confused by different powers and interests, we imagine even now Jesus showing his face HERE: our prayer and closeness … today He still loves us "until death"! For love he offers himself and suffers. We are with him without saying anything, expressing all our love, despite the fact that it is small and imperfect.

HERE it takes place the action of God, who saves us. In his Passion, the Lord Jesus "comes to dwell" once forever in our poor humanity, so that no man can believe he is abandoned, betrayed, cheated, lost in the night of the "meaningless" and not loved. His name is Yeshu’a, which means "God saves!".

Kiss THIS Rock with us, with emotion and recognition… because the Lord has "kissed" before our fragile humanity with the offering of his own life. "Lord, we need you!"
This month we want to pray with you on a unique feature of the Holy Land. When you visit and pray in the holy places, we all have a particular feeling that leads us to think with a wonderful sweetness: “HERE we were born!”. This is the uniqueness of the Holy Land, fifth Gospel, which is also expressed verbally in the liturgy by adding this adverb of place “HIC” (from Latin: “here”). It happens here at Gethsemane a very particular thing, it is Jesus himself who pronounces this “HIC”: “Sustinēte hic et vigilāte mecum” (Mt 26, 38; cf Mk 14, 34). This “HIC” therefore is full of theological meaning, it reveals the mystery of the Incarnation of the Lord, until the mystery of His Passion, Death and Resurrection: ‘How much you loved us, Lord!’.
IN HIS LIFE, OURS

Dear brothers loved by the Lord, peace to you from the favourite place of Jesus. As you can guess from the picture we are collecting olives in this garden. With amazement we live in a familiar atmosphere and welcome the soft heat of the sun in this autumn time. It is very nice to dirty your hands with the olives, smell the particular bouquet, intense and sweet, which is imprinted in the clothes used for the collection. Even more curious is the collection on the tree: you go in search of the most distant olives… in the desire that nothing will be lost.

With a wise reading of our "doing" we discover how the Lord gathers us together, seeks us and want none of us to be lost!

So in our lives, in our "do-act-risk" usually think that we are the architects of the fruits of the collection but, in fact, we benefit from the gift of God that, quietly and with sweetness, shows us how He acts, does and risks for us! In our daily journey we contemplate this sweet and deep mystery of God. Let’s welcome and give thanks for the Presence that is communicated to us (Eucharist)…

Mystery that seems more beautiful to us when we tell it with a poem, a song or a silent smile of lovers.
Dear all, may the Lord grant you peace!

Within less than a month we will be living the birth of Our Saviour. We will go see, touch and kiss the Grotto of the Nativity. In this month’s prayer we ask you to join us in this intention and desire: give ‘heat’ to the Lord! It is Jesus himself who has revealed to some mystic: “I am cold!”.

His statement leads us to contemplate and unite the need of the Child of Bethlehem with the drama of Jesus in Gethsemane. The ‘cold’ that Jesus talks about does not refer only to a physical cold but it refers in particular to the distance and the lack of love towards Him on the part of humanity. He needs our affection, he has ‘hunger and thirst’ for us and our closeness. The Lord is concrete, he speaks to us personally even today: “I need you… I’m cold… warm me with your love and presence!”.

We are all well aware of how the world (the human being!) of our time needs to return to God with humility and recognize that without God cannot see any glimmer of Light… Let us give the “warmth of our heart” to the Lord, who is “abandoned in solitude”… Let us listen to his invitations; Jesus needs our participation in his design of Redemption and we have need of Him to be redeemed.

HOLY CHRISTMAS!
DO THIS IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME January 2018

Hora Sancta

VIGILANTES CUM CHRISTO
APPARUIT AUTEM ILLI ANGELUS DE COELO CONFORTANS EUM

“DO THIS IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME”

Dear friends of Gethsemane: peace to you!
In these new days of the year we are still immersed in the Mystery of Christmas… The Lord has approached our humanity once for all. The Mystery is truly great! Celebrating the Holy Mass I meditated on this desire of God of coming to live in our midst: “The Word became flesh”, the Gospel affirms (John 1,14).
Together with you I wonder, “Where is all this still happening?” The answer I have found is moving, full of mystery and wonderful: in the Eucharist... In the words of the Consecration of bread and wine, THAT mystery that exceeds our capacity for understanding… in everything… continues to happen. It is the same little Baby of Bethlehem, it is the same Lord that HERE in Gethsemane gave himself for us men and offered himself to the Father.
Let us contemplate, let us adore the Lord in our prayer! Let us welcome with love the Love, our Lord Jesus Christ.
Normally when here in Gethsemane I am in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament I focus my attention on the invitation that Jesus makes to his disciples... to his way of praying and acting, gentle and insistent in the struggle. I feel amazed and excited.... This month I would like to share with you an invitation that I perceive as a gift that requires a “step” on our part, of our will: let's not leave the Lord alone in Gethsemane... let us remain with Him, as we are and as we can, stay close to the Lord in that place that we perceive as "Gethsemane".

How many Gethsemane there are in the world! This is the call He makes to each one of us!

To a mystic of the twentieth century the Lord says: “The Sacrament condenses Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of your Jesus. Therefore, when praying with a spirit of reparation to My Eucharist, you pray not only to my Body but also to my Blood as well as to my Soul and Divinity (...). I ask that my Blood be used for the infinite needs of souls. Do not let this ocean of power be fruitless.”
This month our prayer is enriched by the Lenten way that will lead us to the resplendent Light of the Passover of Our Lord Jesus Christ. How much, how much he loves us!

I would like to share with you an intention for our prayer during this time: to look at the darkness with the Light (the gaze) of the Lord. Firstly, we can perceive this: if we listen well to the Word and the holy liturgy, there are many references to the Light, to the radiance of the Lord, to his glory, that will have fulfillment here in Jerusalem. It could be said that these places that we contemplate daily from this garden have the deposit of the “Light” of fulfillment … the Cenacle, HERE, Gethsemane, the Gallicantu, the Flagellation, the Via Crucis, the Calvary and the Resurrection are like “windows” of the grace through which we still receive the divine Light that Our Lord Jesus Christ, with his passage, has left us in the mystery of the Redemption!

A second observation: it is spoken about the Light of Resurrection… but the Lord passes ‘sinking’ in the dark… right HERE, in Gethsemane, He enters each man’s night, past, present and future… enters in the history once and for all and make it sacred! Let us contemplate the places of the fulfillment of his hour… in which He himself, the Lord, once again looks at us with tenderness and intensity… telling us: “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death, stay here with me! Keep watch” (cfr Mk 14,34). Let us pray together to be able to like and welcome in us the mystery of his Passover, the price of our salvation.
Dear friends of Gethsemane, peace to you from the Holy Garden. This coming Thursday we will celebrate Holy Hour at 9:00 p.m. (local time).

We contemplate how God acts silently in the daily actions of the human being ... as God moves within our personal and collective history. Jesus himself HERE, before the arrogance and the human illusion of arresting the Son of God and silencing him, killing him, says: “Let the Scriptures be fulfilled!” (Mk 14,49b).

They have been and will be fulfilled. Let us live in communion this encounter, let us live it with love, gratitude and with great hope: The Lord has overcome evil!

I want to thank all those who collaborate in this divulgación of the Desire of Jesus.

This “our website” is one year old, TheLord bless you !, HAPPY EASTER OF THE LORD.

P.S.: for those who wish to follow the Holy Hour in streaming this is the link:

Holy Hour from the Church of the Gethsemane in Jerusalem
Dear friends of Gethsemane, peace to you!
These days of the Easter season are illuminated from the Promise of Jesus, from the strength of his Word and the communion with the Father and with us. The peace and grace that the Lord gives us with his Presence are truly great, immense and surprising gifts.
Sometimes everything seems like a dream ... a moment, and a veil of sadness makes my face darken when I look at the suffering and despair of other faces, especially of the smallest and innocent, who explicitly express, crying or in silence, with rage or with the pain of abandonment, the most truthful prayer: "Lord, come, assist us, help us! Only you are our salvation".
In those moments I would like to be the voice of a prayer that comes back to me like a healing balm ... I would like to be like a petal of red rose thrown HERE on the Rock, and be associated with the drops of the Precious Blood of Our Lord.

"Here now I receive you, Blood of my Jesus, and sprinkle you over the Church, over the world, over sinners, over purgatory.
Help, comfort, purify, ignite, penetrate and fertilize, o Divine Nectar of Life, that indifference and fault do not block your flowing but, on the contrary, to the few who love you, for so many who die without you, rush and pour out on all this so Divine rain...".
In these days we are encouraged by the sacred liturgy to welcome the Mystery of the Lord's Wedding through the Sunday solemnities that help us to discover how much the Lord loves us! Such Nuptials are also told on the last Sunday, in which we celebrated the Most Holy Body and Blood of the Lord.

If we listen carefully (notice / contemplate / be aware) how much we already live in every Holy Mass, the supreme offering of Jesus (once and for all) is announced in the consecratory words: "This is my Body ... This is my Blood" (Mk 14,21-22). All this speaks of His way of "extending" the Wedding and of his infinite Love for us! He reaches us, comes to meet us: it is the Bread of the Angels that takes the taste appreciated by those who eat it! (see Sap 16, 20-21).

But the Lord is not present only in this "sacred moment" of the Holy Mass. He invites us to become aware of his mysterious Presence that identifies itself also with the poor, the people, the persons in which, in the hiding of disfigured humanity, it is still He who is raised on the Cross (Cf. Jn 3:14; 12; 28; 12.32). The Lord identifies himself with his Church (assembly): "Saul, Saul, why did you persecute me?" (Acts 9,4). We too, in our troubled and so beloved story, can see where He is, the Lord lifted up ... and be able to say: "This is his Body ... his Blood". It is the innocent Lamb who asks for our trust and prayer... towards Him and for our near and far neighbor.
"Here you have how much I loved you!"

This month I would like to share a story taken from the sermons of St. Anthony of Padua. When I heard it (at the Saint's party, on June 13th), I was moved. Later I understood the reason: it is a Sermon on Holy Thursday, in which Saint Anthony, with this allegory, remembers the Passion of God for us men. It is a synthesis of our redemption ...

How much you love us, Lord! This salvific action is still open to all humanity today. Let's pray so that his will be fulfilled in us, welcome the good and the desire that the Father has for each one of us.

"(...) a king had a gold ring adorned with a precious gem. The ring, which was very dear to him, slipped off his finger and fell into a sewer, so he had a great dislike. When he did not find anyone who could recover the ring, he put down the garments of his royal dignity, got dressed in sack, went down to the sewer, looked for the ring for a long time, and finally found it: when he found it, filled with joy took him back to the palace with him. That king is a figure of the Son of God; the ring represents humanity; the precious gem embedded in the ring is the soul of men. These, from the joy of terrestrial paradise, almost slipping from the finger of God, fell into the sewer of hell; this loss was a great disappointment for the Son of God. He looked among the angels and among the men for someone who could recover the ring, but he did not find anyone, because nobody was able to do it. Then he stripped off his garments, he emptied himself, he put on the sack of our misery, he looked for the ring during thirty-three years and, at the end, he descended to hell and there he found Adam with all his posterity: full of joy He took everyone with him and restored them to eternal happiness".

(From the Sermons of Saint Anthony of Padua, Holy Thursday)

HERE in Gethsemane, in this holy Rock, we contemplate in silence the supreme gift of the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. Let us give thanks and restore Love in our common everyday life.
Dear friends of Gethsemane, peace to you.

Our prayer this month would want to pay attention to what the Lord lived here in Gethsemane as God and as Man.

When we think of the Lord here in his anguish we sometimes risk, on the one hand, to diminish the mystery of the redemption that has taken place here, making it a purely human fact. Or, on the contrary, we absolutize the divinity of Jesus by impoverishing the mystery of the Incarnation ... of his feeling the suffering, the abandonment or the fatigue of the struggle against the evil one. These two perspectives in antithesis, if followed, would lead to new heresies that have already been repeated throughout history and Church faced them precisely because they disfigured the Face and the identity of Jesus Christ, our Lord. In fact, it is precisely in our Creed that we profess these two realities united in one person: Jesus Christ, true God, true Man. Saint Maximus the Confessor, in this sense, is enlightening. He says: "What it is manifested as a voluntary consent (Jesus FIAT in Gethsemane: "let your will be done, not mine") is the fact that our salvation is wanted in a human way by a divine person".

I hope that this wise synthesis helps us to perceive how much the Lord has loved us ... He has entered into our humanity and has no longer separated. It's as if he repeated to us: "I really loved you ... all the way!"
Dear friends of Gethsemane, peace to you. This month we want to share a text from a hermit who loves this holy place and the Lord. Looking at the city of COMPLETION let us pray that we can fulfill the plan of salvation that God has thought for us all.

“In this Garden, Jesus does not allow darkness and meaninglessness to guide him; He does not abandon himself to instinct (he was suffering from anxiety, fear and loneliness), nor allow himself to be distracted by his fellow countrymen. Instead, he transfigures the darkness by entering into it and reasserting, from the depths of his conscience, the central element of everything he ever loved and desired: the Will of the Father!

This is the Passion of God for mankind, manifested and announced from the very beginning… even when the delicate Light entered into a small and simple house, even when the silence of Nazareth expressed itself in the perfume of the rough, huge pieces of wood, and in the faces of the peasants… and now, in this very Garden, the Good King descends into the mortal exhaustion of his last steps, with breath mixed with sweat and blood, and plunges himself into death, in order to become its antidote. In his royal Lordship, he stoops to take into his arms his sleeping and exhausted children, to bring them home again for the safe-keeping of their life and Salvation. This is the loving Plan of the ancient Covenant of God the Father”. 
Dear friends of Gethsemane, may the Lord grant you peace!

This first Thursday of the month falls on a special occasion for us Franciscans: it is the day of our beloved Father Saint Francis. The liturgical coincidence of this little-great saint has helped me to look with astonishment at the holy places where we live, I would say from a particular perspective: divine closeness. We usually perceive the closeness of the Lord when we become good people, when we are good and generous, or when we try to be fair and righteous. Everything is true!

In our way of listening to the Word, I am continually surprised how the closeness of the Lord manifests itself in a different way: He feels continually attracted by our needs and our weaknesses ... aspects that we usually hide to show ourselves autonomous and strong.

All this expresses his Name wonderfully: He is the Savior. Therefore, for Him, to enter the Night, in the darkness, in the anguish and to experience the sadness of the soul until death, loneliness, misunderstanding and betrayal ... and to enter the fight until sweating blood (Luke 22, 40-53), are aspects that mysteriously show us his total closeness, his infinite love for us. Let us contemplate this great mystery so that we can recognize with faith and hope the powerful closeness of the Lord to all of us.

Saint Francis has related this closeness of the Lord in his life as much as wanting to "travel the ways of the world crying the passion of his Lord".

(Franciscan sources: 1585)
Dear friends of Gethsemane, peace to you!
The Gospel that we heard last Sunday continues to accompany me, especially the delicacy that Jesus has towards Bartimaeus, the blind man of Jericho, surprises me. Jesus has again seduced me, the one who stops, calls the blind man and asks him: "What do you want me to do for you?" (Mk 10, 51).
Many times the Gospel says how the needy call Jesus, ask him or shout to him to receive the grace they need (among them, for example, the ten lepers, Lk 17, 12ss; 22ss; the centurion with the sick servant, Lk 7, 2ss). In other cases, as we have heard with the blind man from Jericho, it is Jesus who takes the initiative and offers himself. This is quite mysterious and it has made me reflect on what happens here in Gethsemane.
The Lord here, in this garden, asks us for a miracle ... maybe it is not a great work, just to remain with Him. Normally, when I pray, I imagine that I am close to Him in his agony and face to face with his request: "stay here and watch with me" (Mt 26, 38), I try to remain present and in silence at his side. This month I would like to invite you to perform this miracle: each one of us in his prayer and for what he does, ask the Lord: "What do you want me to do for you, my Lord?" All this seems to me to perceive it as a possible miracle that makes us available to the Lord, to love him and fulfill his will.
The living way that the Lord is giving us by listening to his Word, and now for a few days the waiting for his Advent, have led me many times to consider this Holy Place. But I must say that the mystery of God's way of being and acting emerges strongly, in contrast to ours. I would like to pay attention to that fleeting moment that precedes the arrest of the Lord, the reaction of his disciples and the fundamental words that the Lord reveals. On that night of Easter, a night lit by the full moon, the Gospel narrates the approach of a crowd of people, soldiers and guards sent by the chief priests and the elders… among them there is Judas who kisses him and, through that sign of love contaminated by evil, he is released. There is great tension, the situation is taking an unexpected turn… the disciples are gripped, they feel panic, bewilderment and fear, for the Master and towards them: 

"And behold, one of those who were with Jesus, put his hand to the sword, took it out and struck the servant of the high priest, taking off his ear" (Mt 26, 51). Jesus with great force stops the aggressiveness and the evil that is being unleashed: "Put the sword back in the scabbard, because all those who put their hands to the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot pray to my Father, who would immediately give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled, according to which it must take place? "(Mt 26: 51-54).

This question of Jesus greatly affects me: "how the Scriptures would be fulfilled". I still perceive it as an open question that gathers us all and leads us, with a particular meekness, to confront ourselves with our story, which is still waiting to be fertilized by the humble presence of the Lord (Christmas), and invites us to live the same mode of love that He, the Lord, manifested in his Passion, Death and Resurrection.

I ask you to pray with us on this Word of His: "But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled, according to which it must take place?" Let us feel it addressed to us, its gift and consolation, especially in dark and violent situations, or in unimaginable circumstances, in order to be able to stop the evil in his image and with his help.

Useful references for prayer: John 4, 33-34; 5, 36; 9, 4
Dear friends of Gethsemane Peace to you!

We have just begun the new year and perhaps we still have in our mind and in our heart the manger of Bethlehem that welcomed the Lord who became man. Often in these Christmas days I found myself thinking of St. Francis who, at Greccio, on his return from the Holy Land, expresses to his trusted friend named Giovanni his desire of see with his own eyes and touch with his hand the discomforts that the Child had met in assuming our human condition and, therefore, of representing a small Bethlehem live (Franciscan Sources FS: 466-471).

Every time I am more convinced that this great saint, who became small, has intuited a secret that still remains hidden today for us, his sons. Mystery... the characteristics of "seeing" and "touching" seem to express not only a human need that belongs to each one of us, but also represent a concrete form in which we experience the real closeness of God. At the same time, with a broader and deeper theological view of the Gospel we hear, we must admit that God, in the supreme gift of the only begotten Son, sees with his own eyes and touches with his own hands our needy humanity... Great Mystery, old and always new! God 'experiences' our life... our life is known, visited, inhabited by Jesus Christ.

Our desire at the beginning of the year is precisely this: that you can "experience" how much the Lord loved our humanity and that He loves us infinitely.
Dear friends of Gethsemane, peace to you!
We invite you to come here with us with your imagination, to be able to contemplate in these days the beauty of nature, admire and feel the sweet perfume of the almond tree in bloom. Along with all this wonder of the Creator I invite you to maintain the firm hope that the Word of God is fulfilled as He promised. In fact, for us, being here, in front of Jerusalem, it is easy to immediately think of this word revealed by God to the prophet: "What do you see, Jeremiah?" I answered: "I see an almond branch". The Lord added: "Well have you seen for I am watching to fulfill my word" (Jer 1, 11-12).
Sometimes during our work ... in taking care of this holy garden ... I speak to God, silently and I ask him:"Lord ... how I wish you could realize your Word, as you like, in your imagination! You can fulfill your promise". Seeing also the deception of the evil that leads man to violence, injustice and suffering, I recognize within myself a zeal: the imminent desire of His return ... Then I think of His "sweat that here became drops of blood who fall to the ground" (Lk 22, 44) ... and all my fire lasts only a few moments and I find again serenity and strength when always in the inner dialogue I confide:"Lord, if this effort and our sweat would help to return your lost or distant son ... Lord, I am happy and willing to collaborate to your plan of Salvation".

In this month, dear friends, we offer our small but important prayer, our sweat... may it be intercession, reparation and help to the Lord, so that everything can be like a song of the festive liturgy of those in Heaven.
Dear friends of Gethsemane, the Lord will give you his Peace!

At the beginning of this special time of Lenten way, I would like to share with you this mosaic that is found in our Basilica: it represents the kiss that Judas Iscariot gave Jesus HERE in Gethsemane on that night illuminated by the full moon of Easter. This gesture, the kiss, expression of affection and surrender of love... is maliciously soiled! I found an interesting story that comes from a last century mystic female, which tells that Jesus, on rising, brings the disciples here, where He sweated blood, and reached the point of the kiss of betrayal, the Lord asks Peter to kiss him! Peter, who had denied him three times, collapsed on the floor, bursting into tears and, sobbing and afflicted, implores him not to insist. Jesus begs and affirms: "If by a kiss full of falsehood and hatred, the Son of Man was betrayed, by a kiss full of love and mercy it may be Beloved", that yours be the kiss that washes and erases that pain. When I see that the Lord is not loved, that is insulted, blasphemed or not accepted, I believe that I can repair that, in my little way, loving him, praising him, welcoming him in silence through the people I know or through small situations that hide his image. Sometimes I see our disfigured and suffering humanity, which in the face of the poor of Gospel still cries out today: "Lord, help us!" So this invitation comes back to my heart: "But you, give me your heart... your kiss of love!" This gives me so much strength and I think it can be for each of us so, in the daily struggle that unites us, for a greater good and that falls within his plan of salvation. We can call this a prayer of reparation.

Let us remember in the common prayer. The Lord is our strength and only hope.
Some time ago Italian newspapers gave news of a fact that caused a stir and moved many people. It was about a newborn that had been abandoned, wrapped in a plastic bag and thrown into the garbage can. One person, who heard the child's cry, picked him up and brought him urgently to the nearest hospital. The emergency doctors repeatedly tried to revive him by any means. Unfortunately, it was useless: the newborn child gave no more signs of life, he was purple and inert, was dead.

A nurse, perhaps driven by desperation and maternal instinct, between the tears of her silent cry, took him in her arms, and held him tightly to her chest. The unexpected happened: the child had a shudder, a shock ... He began to cry! A miracle! He was alive again!

This event, a miracle of life, still manages to move me and for us, who live HERE in Gethsemane, it makes us think of the Lord and his request that still echoes in this garden. In fact, the Lord Jesus, HERE he makes explicit to stand next to the Father, HERE he shows himself suffering and needy, HERE he enters the struggle, he sweats blood (Lk 22,39-44). Perhaps you too, like me, imagine, think that it is He, HERE, who needs love, who is cold and who must be embraced... True? It can be ... without a doubt.

I also propose another theological perspective: it seems to me that God the Father, in his plan of salvation, from the mystery of the Incarnation to the Mystery of his Easter that we are preparing to celebrate, and, now, in a living liturgy of collective history and personal, never ceases to embrace our humanity with immense love to bring us back to life.

In this month let’s pray about this great mystery.

Happy Easter, may it be in the Lord.
Dear friends of Gethsemane, peace be with you!
The whole Church is living a very intense time where the risen Lord illuminates every circumstance of our life, even those circumstances in which there is hatred and violence.
I wish to share with you a phrase of Jesus that still goes back to my heart and that HERE, in this valley, in this City, where the Scriptures were fulfilled, still resounds: "Do you understand what I have done for you?" (Jn 13, 12). The context in which he says it is the washing of the feet... but it seems important to me to listen again to this question of Jesus in the light of all that happened in the Paschal mystery: here at the Cenacle, here at Gethsemane, at the Gallicantum, at the Flagellation, at the Via Crucis, at Calvary and at the new Tomb, now empty!
Even today his Word resounds loudly and with gentle power: "Do you understand what I have done for you?".
We perceive this question of his as a precious treasure of his greatest love, which opens us to the heavenly realities of the Face of the Father, who gave us the Son and who poured out his love in us... "Do you understand what I have done for you?"
WE ARE NEVER ALONE

The communion that Jesus lives with the Father is intimate in his divinity and is not separated from his humanity, even in the darkest moments. We often imagine Jesus, here in Gethsemane, alone, suffering and abandoned: this is a mistake, He and the Father are in us and we in them!

This is the awareness to be kept in the light of Easter, a gift that goes beyond the own merits and capacities. This is the intimate and definitive experience of every Christian: we are never alone!

The Father never leaves us alone, this is impossible, of an absolute impossibility, intrinsic to God, to his intimate interpersonal reality, between the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

It is impossible for the Father to leave Jesus alone even for a single moment, just as it is impossible for each of us to be left alone, because we are bound to God in an indissoluble way.

This is God's promise to us ... his "Yes".

In these days we contemplate the Risen One who Ascends to the Father, from this mountain, for an "invisible Gate" to our eyes: it is the glorious manifestation of the Father who is now fulfilled in perfect stature: "before the world was" (Jn 17, 5). Jesus being the Word of the Father is as if He were HERE, once again, and he explained to us this Gospel passage of his Passion, to us, his disciples: "I have done the things that are pleasing to him" (see Jn 8, 15-16 ; 28-29). And we his disciples, in light of all this, we could say moved: "You said it ... it's true! You wished it, you wanted it, you really did it for us!"

Let's pray this month so that his Love without measure can be known more and more.
Dear friends of Gethsemane, peace to all of you.

This month of July for us is characterized by the Solemnity of the Precious Blood of Jesus which we HERE celebrate with the Pontifical Mass in the Basilica of Agony (1st July).

It seems important to me to briefly mention this Mystery which allows us to reflect on the great gift of revelation and redemption.

The image of blood runs throughout the Old Testament, speaks to us of the relationship of man with God, but more precisely of the salvation that God began with the people of Israel and which was then fulfilled in Jesus’ Passover. In the Book of Leviticus it is said: "the blood expiates, because it is life" (Lv 17, 11). In fact, the prohibition against tasting the blood of animals already existed at that time (Lv 17) and the reason is that in the blood there is life, and life belongs only to God ... therefore God alone can decide on blood, man can only remain in communion with God by living the commandments and his Covenant. In the O.T., when this communion was obscured by sin, a sacrifice with the shedding of blood was necessary: the offering of a life, so that the covenant of man with God would return to being intact.

With Jesus, all this is fulfilled, mysteriously, definitively and wisely.

He is the Lord of life, He is the one who can decide on the life of man, on His own life. And it is He who HERE decides to donate it, uniting his will to that of the Father (Mk 14:36): that is, he decides to pour out his Divine Blood in sacrifice for all. If in the A.T. whoever drank the blood of another living being, had to be put to death, here is exactly the opposite: it is this Blood that gives life. The Blood of Christ is poured out as a sacrifice (HERE in Gethsemane "sweating" in anticipation of the offering of Lk 22, 44) and for this reason the Cross is the true Altar on which the only true immolated Lamb, victim and priest, pours this Blood for all and for ever (Jn 19, 23ss).

In every Eucharist, the Blood of Christ is offered as a sacrifice for us. It is the same eternal sacrifice that comes to us today.

In this month, let us pray that this priceless gift may be poured into the Church, into the world and into all souls to renew the Covenant with God again and again.
VIGILANTES CUM CHRISTO
APPARUIT AUTEM ILLI ANGELUS DE COELO CONFORTANS EUM

“I HAVE REDEEMED YOU AT A HIGH PRICE”
(cfr I Cor 6,20)

Dear friends of Gethsemane, peace to you from Jerusalem!
The Word that has been given to us these days, with power illuminates our journey as disciples, the time we are living and the place in which we find ourselves, physically and spiritually. The Genesis page (18, 20-32) tells about Abraham's intercession with God to avoid the punishment he intended to inflict on Sodom and Gomorrah. The dialogue reveals once again the merciful and fair face of the Lord who takes pity and promises to save the few righteous who find in the sinful cities. We all know that in the end the cities will be destroyed by the degradation and perversity of men, except Lot and his family (Gen. 19, 29).

God’s mercy and justice, HERE in Gethsemane, are personified by the Only Begotten Son, but with absolute differences. In that "Yes" of delivery and conformity to the will of the Father ("my will not be done but your will" Lk 22:42) a mystical exchange takes place, in an overturning of roles: Jesus (the only Just and God!) becomes the Mediation for the Salvation of all humanity (multitude of sinners!). The "catastrophe" of God no longer turns towards the unworthy man… but God himself, in Jesus, gives himself in his immense love for us, offers himself as an immolated Lamb of atonement (Rev 5, 8-14), so that all men can know forgiveness and how much God really loves them. What permanently and absolutely seals this event is that this "exchange" is wanted and decided by God and not by man: "Was it necessary for Christ to endure this suffering to enter his glory?" Lk 24, 26). We, little humans, cannot, however intelligent we are, perceive the confines of this event of GRACE!

It is still time of Mercy … we must say it and announce it also to this our world that seems to disregard God! Let us not leave Lord’s love fruitless, but collaborate with our prayers and on the occasions that the Lord gives us to make our little offering... the Lord will reward us.
I wish to share with you a thought which I received from the Lord in a moment of prayer in this holy place. I hope it can also help your prayer. When we pray, we usually ask the Lord many things, sometimes even weird ... But we are not the first! The Gospels also tell us of these requests or prayers made to Jesus. We also heard them in the Gospel reading a few Sundays ago: "Lord, are they few who are saved?" (Lk 13:23). It seems to me very profound the answer of Jesus who knows well our hearts: "Strive to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter it, but they will not succeed" (Lk 13, 24).

It seems to me very important in our prayer to become familiar with the Lord and ask him questions that concern him, his love, his promise of eternal love! On this Rock on which he sweated his most holy Blood in that suffering "May your will be done ..." (Lk 22:42), it came to me to ask the Lord: "Lord, tell me ... how much have you loved us?" I imagined it with a regal and solemn smile, moved and joyful, with arms wide open ... in the shape of a cross! Truly Lord you loved us to die! You are the Door of life, the Door of love! (Jn 10, 7). He himself explains the secret of this love: "For this reason the Father loves me: because I offer my life and then take it again" (Jn 10:17).

HERE in Gethsemane, in this Garden, on this Rock, everything helps us to see and to believe concretely how He himself passed from this narrow door through the offer of his life. We all have difficulty in truly giving life, instead we are led to preserve it, defend it ... until the delirious desire to possess it! Before any rule, imperative, obligation or lifestyle that we aim to live, even morally, I think it is important to stop and contemplate this immeasurable Love of the Lord which he continually tries to show us and give us whenever we turn to Him. Here at Gethsemane everything "shines" and tells how Jesus seeks us and we seek Him.

Let’s pray so that every creature allow their Creator meet them.

PS: I make you share some data on our site, not to feed delusions of grandeur, but to feel more and more in communion with the Church ‘invisible’ but more than ever real, hoping that the Lord can be more and more welcomed, loved and consolated. Here the data:

1. NEWSLETTER REGISTRATIONS ARE 1400 (sometimes a registration refers to a whole group made up of several people);
2. THOSE WHO ARE REAL AND OWN MEMBERS OF THE HOLY HOUR ARE 770 (even here an inscription does not always correspond to a single person, but to prayer groups);
3. The WORLD COUNTRIES from which the Site has been visited are 176;
4. From September 2017 until today, visits to the Site in total are around 80,000.

We greatly thank those who work in silence for the Lord, let us invoke the blessing of the Lord!
Peace to you all friends of Gethsemane.
This month is characterized for us by the feast of St. Francis and it is a particularly significant year, because exactly 800 years ago, the Poverello of Assisi, came as a pilgrim and witness of peace here to the Holy Land, staying until 1220, before returning in Italy.

While the Fifth Crusade was raging and it seemed that the only possible language was that of weapons, Francis of Assisi crosses the lines of war and overcame the logic of the clash of civilizations in progress, simply following the divine inspiration that led him to believe in the possibility of fraternal encounter with every creature.

We ask you for your closeness in prayer so that we can be a "mediation" for the man of today, as our father St. Francis was. It is not true that one must be perfect or in "rule" (of the same thought) before being able to open the Gospel! Instead, the opposite is true: sometimes by opening the Gospel it is possible to dialogue and discover in the other the image of God, that "neighbor" of which Jesus speaks in the Gospel.

We pray for the concerns that our humanity lives, threatened by economic blackmail and alleged wars that weigh on the poorest and the defenseless forced to move in search of a future that more often than not turns into a suffered "hell". God sees all this and still asks justice today!

Let us invoke Peace together, from this Earth loved by the Lord, from this Garden in which the Son of God has sweated Blood. Mary Most Holy intercedes for us.
Dear friends of Gethsemane, may the Lord grant you his Peace!
In the last months the beauty and Mystery that the Lord manifests in the Gospel resonates strongly in me. Especially HERE in Gethsemane all the humanity that He wanted to assume as the Second Divine Person of the Holy Trinity emerges. From the Incarnation onwards, we could say, divinity has clothed itself with humanity.

An example is the mosaic of the apse of the Cefalù Basilica (Sicily - Italy), in which the Pantocrator manifests his royalty and solemn humanity in a unique beauty. To help understand this wonderful work of art, there is an inscription that runs along the arch that delimits the apse: "FACTUS HOMO FACTOR HOMINIS FACTIQUE REDEMPTOR - IUDICO CORPOREUS CORPORA CORDA DEUS", whose translation is: "Made man the creator and redeemer of the created man, I judge as corporeal the bodies, as God the hearts."

Art becomes theology and theology into beauty that speaks! It seems to me important to contemplate, with this light, the Lord HERE in Gethsemane, with the purpose of further raising awareness of the Mystery of salvation that the Lord manifested HERE ... "Enter" into our humanity to the bottom, know bitterness, tiredness, the struggle, the sadness, the abandonment ... but also the immense love for the Father, in a delivery that illuminates each offering, both hidden and striking. It is the Mystery of Redemption, which still continues in global history and in our personal life, as an event of salvation that is offered, even to the man who apparently does not seem to be interested in either God or others or, worse yet, trample on his neighbor, moving against, with winds of war, even in the name of God!

We pray, we ask forgiveness, we intercede, we thank, in the desire of the Lord: "Stay here, watch and pray ..." (Mt 26:38).
THE WORD COMES TO DWELL IN OUR MIDST

VIGILANTES CUM CHRISTO
APPARUIT AUTEM ILLI ANGELUS DE COELO CONFORTANS EUM

THE WORD COMES TO DWELL IN OUR MIDST

Dear friends of Gethsemane, peace to you!
We are in the first steps of Advent, strong and full of waiting time, in which the holy liturgy invites us to watch over, be careful, prepare ourselves to welcome the Lord who comes!
We share an image… almost like an icon: we think and imagine to meet Most Holy Mary, with St Joseph beside her … She has a belly more than 8 months pregnant, since that encounter with the Mystery full of Light. Now the light is inside her! Ancient Scripture, by God’s decree, is being fulfilled! It is She who tells us… What does she want to tell us? How does she tell us? With a big smile but perhaps also with a veil of realism, which says his smallness in the face of such a great Mystery and of a world so unprepared and perhaps incapable of understanding!
In the prologue of John (Jn 1,1-18) we find this divine decree, real and persistent… in loving! He decides to give himself to humanity even if his own people do not welcome him! This is a theological truth that still persists today and that illuminates Gethsemane: HERE the Son of God gave himself and offered himself even if man does not welcome him and is distracted …. Indifferent! We all experience it, in ourselves and out of us (just look at how violent outbreaks continue to rise in the world that are born from the arrogance of evil and hate that cause man to dominate and “disfigure” the image of God that man himself has! ).
May Mary Most Holy and Saint Joseph be an example to us in living the welcome. May this be an occasion of intercession for our humanity and for the man of today who seeks the beauty and warmth of love in the greatness of this world… when instead, true Love becomes small and humble.

Happy Advent and Merry Christmas in the Lord!
Dear friends of Gethsemane, Peace be with you!
We will join you with this writing wishing you a new year… may it be in the Lord!
This time of the Lord’s Christmas is characterized by the song of the Angels made to the little shepherds.
Let the little ones take us by the hand to be among the little ones whom the Lord loves! This mystery of the Incarnation it is the great mystery of God’s desire to commit himself to us, men and women, beyond our capacity and awareness to welcome it. I share with you a thought that we too have received in these days. Every human being, beyond his beliefs, wants to grow… evolve! Actually, the child wishes to grow up as an adult; every human being, through intelligence, culture, formation, wants to become powerful to invent, build, dominate. Dominance leads man to desire to reign (in the political, social, religious order), with the great risk of becoming “god” against creation and creatures, that creeps like a poison silently! In all this ascent by the man, only God, the Most High, has the desire to become a Child!!! This is our God! “Before Me no one was God, no one after Me: before Me will bend every knee, and every tongue will give honour” (Antiphon to the Magnificat of First Vespers, 3rd Sunday of Advent).
So it also happened HERE in Gethsemane, in the Garden where the Son of the Most High, united to the will of the Father, decided, in meekness and smallness, to sing eternally the superhuman Love for all of us, love that no force of any kind can stop. Let us share in this plan of salvation by saying our thanks, interceding for all humanity in need, becoming small and hopeful in the face of the complex history that is in the hands of the one Lord, Triune God and One!
Dear friends of Gethsemane, may the Lord grant you his peace! The news conveyed by the mass media is not very comforting... The messages about solidarity and good that many people silently do are very rare. There is some confusion and general discomfort at the appearance of events as open and declared wars between different nations, diseases, hunger, floods and earthquakes and fires. Even more curious is the swarm of apocalyptic messages that instill fear and bewilderment.

On the contrary, the Lord, in the Gospel, in the face of much more serious events, invites us to an immense hope... that can only be understood if we maintain a strong relationship with Him: "When these things begin to happen, stand up and raise your heads, because your liberation approaches" (Lk 21:28), "Watch and pray at all times..." (Lk 21:36). The Evangelist offers us an important note to understand the place where Jesus pronounces such words... and it is precisely HERE, in Gethsemane, between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives, between his teaching in the temple and his overnight stop: "During the day he taught in the temple, at night he went out and spent the night outdoors on the mountain called Mount of Olives" (Lk 21:37).

All this seems to me of great importance: It’s good news for each of us! This is the invitation and prayer that we want to share with you all, dear friends: in the events we are living in, in the places where we are, in our meetings, whether poor or rich, dramatic or magnificent, bright or dark, let us carry his Word, his Promise, which will never be broken. It is the Master who HERE, from this Garden, advises us: to struggle, to darkness, we should not go alone... We can only do this by being at his side, with vigilance and prayer. “Stay here and keep watch with me… Watch and pray, lest you fall into temptation. Spirit is ready, but flesh is weak” (Mt 26:38. 41).
Dear friends of Gethsemane, peace be with you!
This month I would like to meditate with you on the strength of weakness. It is clear that weakness in itself is not positive, but carefully observed in the light of faith, from a theological perspective, it presents a power, a force that emanates to other dimensions, and in an admirable way we remain amazed. The Lord succeeds from a situation that we consider negative, in which we perceive evil and suffering, and from it, He extracts a greater good! This is the mystery of the plan of Salvation that God manifested to us. In these days we are meditating on the “Servant songs of Isaiah”, that is, four songs that are inserted in the so-called deutero-Isaiah (Is cc 40-55). If you have the opportunity to read them in depth, they will be a timely preparation for the Paschal Mystery in which we are set out.
This mystery is great... immense! and if I listen to myself, I notice how I also find it difficult to accept the way of God’s revelation in this “Servant” which enters into suffering. Evident for all of us is the Christological reference of these prophecies of Isaiah: they speak about the Passion of the Lord, they tell of Gethsemane, of the Man of Sorrows” (cfr. Is 53). This is the way God chose to enter our humanity and paradoxically manifests in it his way of reigning. The Lord Jesus Christ HERE, in this garden that has seen his Passion, reaches every man, every situation, and takes by the hand every person and from distance brings it back Home.
Let us pray that the Lord will give us the strength to stay beside Him. May it also be accomplished in the Church and in us, as Saint Paul says: “Therefore I rejoice in the sufferings I bear for you and complete in my flesh what is missing from the sufferings of Christ, in favor of his Body which is the Church” (Col 1:24).
Happy Lent!
Dear friends of Gethsemane, peace to you all.

In these days of suffering we celebrate the Holy Mass every day at the foot of the Holy Rock that received the drops of the precious Blood sweated by our Saviour and, in particular, every Thursday the votive Mass, which commemorates the agony of our Lord Jesus Christ. Whoever was here learns and knows.

These are days of great trial and loss for all, time seems to stop in a mysterious and dark nightmare. Many of us have been touched and perhaps will be by this epidemic; torn from family relationships, we know that some die alone in hospital or in their own homes... deprived of the affection and closeness of their loved ones and of a spiritual accompaniment to this passage! One breathes anguish in the deepest bitterness of being powerless in the face of this scourge. Even technology and communication show their limits and the fragility of man emerges, perhaps a greater awareness: it is not God! Moreover, we learn and know that many live the discomfort and pain of being deprived of the Eucharist, "medicine of immortality".

We would like to be with you all as a caress that comforts the soul of many people known only by the Creator, faces that we know cry out to Him day and night. Never as at this moment do we hear the cry and the lament of suffering humanity. We perceive Gethsemane throughout the world, in those who now pray, struggle, sweat 'blood'; in those who now suffer, in those who ask for closeness, in the dark and in solitude.

With this prayer-thought, like the Angel who HERE in Gethsemane consoled our Lord, we wish to be a 'bridge' and reach each one of you, from the smallest to the largest, to tell you that in that 'Yes' that Jesus pronounced in this Holy Land, in the offering of his Life, there is still all his divine strength and his decision to stay with us. Still today he repeats "stay here with me" (Mt 26:38). He doesn't abandon any of us.

Let us be taken by the hand of Him with great trust! He learns and knows, reaches everyone, who believes being in the 'rule'and who thinks he is not... has shed his Blood for all of us! Let us all feel spiritually called HERE to Holy Mass. Let us be taken by the hand of his great Promise: "I have not lost any of those whom the Father has given to me" (cf Jn 18:9). Feel remembered by this Holy Place where we welcome your intentions of prayer and place them on this Rock of agony, ‘Altar on the world’M, invoking, through the intercession of Mary Most Holy and of all the Angels and Saints, the Blessing of the Lord on all humanity.
Dear friends of Gethsemane, peace be with you.
The photo we have chosen is quite explanatory to introduce us to this Holy Week that we are preparing to live in a totally new way.
To raise the chalice can have various theological meanings, referring to the Chalice of the new and eternal Covenant, raised by the Lord at the Last Supper (Lk 22:20), mentioned in the agonizing prayer of Jesus HERE in Gethsemane (Lk 22:42). In this time when Gethsemane is more than ever present in the whole world, we wish to invite each of you, in spite of everything, to raise together our prayer to the Lord to "give him thanks". We think it is limiting to say that this "bitter chalice" has been known by the Lord, almost in search of pietistic consolation.
Though ministers of the Lord, therefore called to be His 'mediation', it would still be restricted and too human to tell you that we bring you into this Chalice (it would still be our merit!). God’s action is much greater and he calls each of us to pray to him in a new way in "spirit and truth" (Jn 4:24). For this reason, as children, grateful for the Gift that our Saviour is for every man, let’s repeat together our need of Him.
Let’s raise our THANKS for the gift that the Lord has given to all of us with his immortal Life: his Passover!

Best wishes in the Lord’s Passover.

P.S.: for those who want to stream the Holy Hour here is the link:
https://www.cmc-terrasanta.com/it/event/ora-santa-%7C-getsemani/414
Dear friends of the Holy Hour, peace be with you!

In these days I have been attracted by this image that the Lord has given us by talking about himself: He is the “good Shepherd” and has a special relationship with the sheep that calls each one by its name (!) He is well known by the keeper of the sheepfold and the sheep recognize Him, his voice! A beautiful image, deep and filial... Soon after, to the misunderstanding of his listeners, He will say: I am the Gate of the sheep (Jn 10:7); if anyone enters through me, he will be saved, he will enter and go out, and he will find pasture (Jn 10:9). Together with you I ask myself: what does it mean to enter and exit this door?

If He reveals “Himself as the “Door” means that it allows us to enter and go out and find food, and in the end to be saved! We without Him cannot exit “from the condition of sin in which we find ourselves, without His opening the Door of the Kingdom we are inevitably locked out, alone... lost! In fact, Psalm 49 well describes that the existence of a man without God is at the mercy of an unjust shepherd. He leads him only to death: (As sheep are sent to hell, death will be their shepherd Ps 49 (48) v. 15).

All this illuminates the Holy Place in which we are and gives depth to the “Way, Truth and Life”, which are in Him, the Good Shepherd. (Jn 14:6). In the Christian Tradition the attribute “good” has always been referred to the One who offered his life (Jn 10,11) from his Incarnation until he was the Lamb slain on the Cross (Redemption). Let’s contemplate this power of love, let’s love Love strongly. Let’s remain in Him, let’s “travel back and forth” his path, his way of loving, just as we are able... let us repair “the Love not loved”, Saint Francis of Assisi would say. May our prayer and unceasing request of the gift of the Holy Spirit help us to taste the mystery of love which united us to Him with His seal, the Blood of the Man-God (Ct 8,6-7).
Dear friends of Gethsemane, peace be with you! The gifts of the Lord are always many, despite the difficulties that the pandemic is creating at an economic level and especially at a personal level, in the mind and psyche of many fragile people. But the Promise of the Lord does not fail, and this awareness should help us to have, more and more, a transcendent gaze that rises to Him, to live by Him and His Word… of His Spirit! Last Sunday, the feast of Pentecost, from this holy place, looking at the Upper Room, we too invoked the gift of the Holy Spirit. We still sing the hymns of the liturgy while in these days Ordinary Time has begun. We seem to better understand the new experience lived by the first Church (men and women like us!), spreading the Gospel everywhere from Jerusalem.

It is fascinating and important to draw attention to how the “extraordinary” (the Risen One) entered the “ordinary” life of the first Christians! We must remember: it is so also for us! The strength of the Gospel is actuality, and this means that our daily life can be Gospel. The Lord himself HERE at Gethsemane entered this ‘ordinary’ place (“where he used to go…” Lk 22,39; “often he retired to that place…” Jn 18,2) to fulfill the will of the Father: to love!

May the Lord help us to live his Gospel with greater awareness.
Dear friends of Gethsemane, peace be with you all! This month we want to share part of the homily of His Excellency Mgr. Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Apostolic Administrator of the Latin Patriarchate, on the occasion of the Chrism Mass celebrated here in our Basilica on 18 June 2020 (Chrism Mass is celebrated on Holy Thursday but this year, because of the epidemic, has been postponed). There are profound hints to what the Lord has lived in this garden for all of us. May it be an occasion for prayer and meditation on the Mystery that has been fulfilled HERE and still today, the Lord asks us all to live His Word.

"(...) Together with Jesus and like Him, among the many confused voices that we have heard in recent days, as Church and as priests, we have the grace and the task of making the Word of God resound first. It is the Word which corrects very short-sighted human views; It expands narrow political and social strategies, it points out to our tired and disoriented communities, the evangelical paths of faith and essentiality, of sobriety and sharing. Only then will we not indulge in cheap generic optimism. On the contrary, we will find in the Word of God the strength and courage to act and speak with hope; a hope founded on the God of the Covenant who - as the prophet Isaiah reminds us - never fails in His promise to rebuild from our rubble (…) we must not invent new places or new roles for the Church and priests in the world, but once again to relocate ourselves to the place where Jesus was, and that place must also be ours: the Upper Room and the Cross. I am not here to make an apology for pain, but to remind us that we can bear pain by transforming it into an offering, which becomes a gift of Self. The place in which we find ourselves now, Gethsemane, reminds us precisely of this gift of Self, of total abandonment to the will of God. We are here today also to take on the commitment to make His will and His life our own. And we would be deluded if we think that this abandonment is something automatic. Jesus himself in Gethsemane experienced a dramatic struggle: the temptation to prefer his own will: "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me! But your Will, not mine, be done!" (Mt. 26:39)

Here in Gethsemane, Jesus’ relationship with the Father is at play. It constitutes the identity of Jesus, who is Son and Son alone. Jesus has always lived a filial relationship of love, obedience, complete trust and reciprocity with the Father. But now Jesus feels that this fidelity to the Father’s plan requires him to renounce even his own identity as Son. In fact, it is a question of taking upon humanity’s sin, which is disobedience to the Father. Ironically, to be faithful to the Father, Jesus must lose Him. Losing the Father, living the extreme distance from God with sinful humanity, accepting this total solitude and abandonment, is the only way, at that moment, to remain a son. Ironically, it is the only way to love the Father at that decisive hour.

At play here in Gethsemane is also the relationship with one’s brothers and sisters; with the humanity that Jesus had assumed and which the disciples represented. At that decisive moment, Jesus must give life to his brothers … but what were they doing? They sleep. They are not with Him and therefore they manifest their extreme human fragility. Another very important relationship is at play: that with the evil one - Satan. He returns here with his power of temptation and hopes to find a weakened Jesus and wants to overcome him by intruding between the Father and Jesus, just as he once intruded between God and Adam, and likewise he tried to do in the desert through the three temptations. Satan wants to separate Jesus from the Father by tempting him to do his own will and not that of the Father. In light of all this, here in this Holy Place and in our own different gethsemanes, all of us, but especially we bishops and priests, must profess and declare our will to unite with Jesus, to identify with Him¹ (…).

Let us promptly intercede to the Lord for the many "Gethsemanes" which are in the world, that require God’s help and presence.

Dear friends, peace be with you all from Jerusalem!

Celebrating the Holy Eucharist before this city of God, in the communion of the one Bread and the one Chalice, we ask ourselves how we can strengthen and share our prayer to be a Church (assembly) that intercedes as at the beginning "one heart and one soul" (Acts 4:32) making ourselves responsible for each other and for all humanity. Because of the pandemic around the world, the time we live is one of uncertainty and fear. Many are the people who hope that everything can go back to the way it was before and some behave irresponsibly, as if nothing had happened and everything was an invention. There are many profiteers of this chaotic situation who carry on their ideology to increase their interest. Others instead have "fear of fear" and have isolated themselves in a cold solitude devoid of affections and constructive encounters.

If we were to use an image representative of this situation, it seems to see a multitude of lonely people, divided among themselves and sad, a reality that moves away from God’s desire to see us joyful, united among us and in communion with Him. We do not think we are presumptuous, but rather we are certain that from this Holy Place, unique in the world, we are called to welcome and "spill" like a mystical beneficial rain, his Blood on the whole world, on every city, on every house, on every person, so that we may meet again, in spiritual communion, together, in raising a single "thank you" to the Lord for imploring his help and salvation. Alone, we can do nothing! We invite everyone to find ways to live this intention of prayer, to be a small oasis in which the Lord is implored, sought, loved, welcomed with trust and availability. Let's do it in the small but important reality in which we meet: in the same sunset, in the same prayer, in the breaking of the Bread, in the same struggle, in the same hope… we meet, in the certainty that the Lord himself and Mary Most Holy Assumed in Heaven, are with us. Amen.
Dear friends of Gethsemane, peace be with you all!

Listening to the Word of God, which we welcomed last week, has repeatedly drawn my attention to the invitation that HERE at Gethsemane the Lord makes to the disciples of all times: "watch and pray" (Mt 26:41)! An explicit invitation was in this passage:

"So stay awake, because you do not know the day when your master is coming. Try to understand this: if the householder had known at what time of the night the burglar would come, he would have stayed awake and would not have allowed anyone to break through the wall of his house. Therefore, you too must stand ready because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect" (Mt 24,42-44).

Thereafter the Lord in the parable makes the example of the faithful servant who lives his service thinking and loving and waiting therefore, the return of his landlord... watching. In contrast there is the dishonest servant who does not care about the landlord and begins to behave badly, forgetting the service that his master entrusted him, as if he did not return, and even worse, did not exist!

I am very impressed by Jesus’ invitation: "Try to understand this...". It is a sweet and strong invitation, as if he wanted to awaken our consciences, an ever-present invitation! In our somewhat confused time, where everything seems fluctuating, unimportant or useless, the Lord’s invitation -to pray and to watch- can take on this very important meaning: to remain faithful in the little things, in the daily events of our lives, as little disciples, humble, who recognize and know that the Lord is there, will return and that his Promise is eternal and worthy of absolute trust!

Let us thank, pray, watch with the Lord from THIS garden, so that his will may be fulfilled.
Dear friends of Gethsemane, peace be with you all. In this time, a little confused and uncertain, ordinary life for many nations is destabilized and the consequences are always the poorest and the most needy. Let us ask the Lord the grace to read this historical time with his eyes, with our gaze fixed on him, who knows and learns about… so that we may grow in trust in God who never abandons us. In our spiritual readings we have found a script in which Jesus “dictates” to a mystical soul the Holy Hour. We bring you only a small part that seems to help us to live this time with Him HERE in Gethsemane:

"I am God and your Servant, and I am here waiting for you to say to me, "I am hungry" to give myself as Bread to you. (...) I am God and I beg you to love my heart. I beg you. For your love, if you love me, it is good for you. I am God. With or without your love I am always God. But you are not. Without my love you are nothing: dust. I want you with me. I want you here. I want to make, from your dust, a light of bliss. I want you not to die. But live, because I am Life and I want you to have Life."

Let us pray, let us thank the Lord for his eternal and immeasurable love! Let us intercede together at the Altar of God for all humanity with great confidence that God never abandons us and wants our salvation.
Dear friends of Gethsemane, peace be with you from Jerusalem!

We all note with apprehension how this time of pandemic is silently creating division, bewilderment and a dramatic feeling of fear and confusion not to mention the economic consequences that for some touch despair! This 'evil', we cannot call it otherwise, comes to affect vital aspects of every human being: in particular the relationship between us and in a sneaky way with God and forces us to be increasingly isolated and in solitude. From this holy place, the Gethsemane, I think once again of how many 'Gethsemane' there are in the world at this historical moment... I am referring to the humanity that is experiencing this great trial and I think that the Lord sees, knows and understands this suffering and this struggle!

Even the Disciples know this proof! That night, they come here and pass from a solemn and festive situation (the Easter Supper) to a situation never seen and unexpected: the Master sweats blood and is suffering and "is about to be delivered into the hands of men" (Lk 9:43). Suddenly the situation precipitates and their ideal is broken, the dreamed world of peace and justice collapses. In a few hours they will find themselves scattered, alone and frightened. Jesus had predicted it (Jn 16:32).

But it is precisely at this moment of "trial" that our Lord Jesus Christ asks the disciples of yesterday and today to stand beside him in prayer (Mt 26:38), he invites us to be vigilant because He knows our fragility which He himself experienced as a man, "The spirit is ready, but the flesh is weak" (Mt 26:41). In this difficult time, in which we are sifted like wheat, we ask the Lord for the gift of being able to remain available and faithful to his will, if we remain close to him nothing and no one can really harm or frighten us ("don't be afraid of the one who kills the body, but be afraid of the one who kills the spirit" cf Mt 10:28). Let us seek the most appropriate way to live this closeness to the Lord, through prayer, fasting and participation in the sacraments.

Let us remain spiritually united in prayer.
Dear friends of Gethsemane, peace be with you from Jerusalem!

Soon it will be Christmas and the appointment with that night, which illuminates all the other nights, is now approaching. Usually every year, in the early afternoon of Christmas Eve we walk from Gethsemane to go to Bet-lehem (House of Bread). At this moment there are no pilgrims, everything is strange, anomalous. I look at the moon, that is reaching its fullness, and for a moment I think of that Night. I imagine Mary and Joseph... the Little Baby, the astonished shepherds, that starry sky: the same MOON! St Francis of Assisi comes to mind, I return to Greccio: I wanted to see and touch the sublime event of the Child of Bethlehem and the difficulties that he must have experienced at birth in a cave. A manger is created within me!

But now, on this night, we are HERE before Him in the Bread from Heaven (Holy Sacrament), among the same olive trees, in this garden in which the Lord, in the last hours of his earthly life, accomplishes the mystery of the Redemption. And it is HERE that he sweats his precious Blood, in that Night, for now. We raise our eyes to our friend, a silent witness, and allow the Lord himself tell us the mystery of which he made us partakers: "If you knew how much I loved you and how much I desire you beside Me! I gave all Myself to have you! From the Throne of Heaven to the darkness of the tomb... I have given all of Me; for the joy of the Father and for the love that binds me to you children created in my image and likeness".

Let us thank, intercede, invoke forgiveness for the unloved Love. We praise and return his gifts with our lives and in the simple everyday.
“Jesus became flesh and stands before us”

In this Christmas season we contemplate the Mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God. We will never cease to amaze ourselves before this infinite gift. In it there is everything: the plan of salvation prepared by God the Most High Father, which is fulfilled in the availability of the Son, in coming to "put his tent among us" (Jn 1:14). But not only that, in the Mystery of the Incarnation there is also the presentation of the Redemption, with all its strength, which if on the one hand, raises our gaze from earth to Heaven, on the other hand, we know that the reopening of the gates of Paradise took place on the merits of the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, in meekness and in the delivery of Himself: supreme manifestation of Love. We think of the Virgin Mary and Saint Joseph who, in their wonder of having Love made flesh in their arms, surely wondered what would be the way in which the Redemption of all humanity would be accomplished. These mysteries come out of our ability to fully understand, but we can sense some light, by his grace.

An example of light for me was the Word we heard this second Sunday of Christmas: the Prologue of John. This is how it begins: "In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (Jn 1:1). Yes, we recognize it, it has a somewhat difficult language because the Apostle writes in Greek. But I would invite you, in your prayer, with great respect, to specify who this "Word" is. It is Jesus! Consequently, without taking anything away from the original text, we could listen again to the whole Prologue of John with these or similar words: "In the beginning was Jesus, the Son of the Most High; He was with God and Jesus was God! ... "He was in the beginning with God: all things were made through him, and without him nothing was made of all that exists" (Jn 1,2-3). Beautiful! With wonder we are taken by the hand by the Evangelist who a little later says: "And the Word became flesh..." (Jn 1:14). And Jesus, the Son of the Most High... "made himself flesh, and pitched his tent among us; and we saw his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth".

This is just a small example … But contemplating, praying to the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, we will be able to listen to Jesus himself who tells us this immense Mystery, which precedes us, which envelops us and takes us by the hand! Let us praise, thank, bless the Lord today and always for his immense love towards us his little children. Let us ask for the gift of being able to grow in faith in Him in this particular time.

Happy New Year!

(Ps: the underlined part is our interpretation)
Dear friends of Gethsemane, may the Lord give you his peace!

At the end of the daily Holy Mass, in our Basilica of Gethsemane, in a brief moment of recollection, I thank, I pray to the Lord and I kiss the sacred Rock that received the most precious Blood of our Saviour. The Lord gives various consolations from this holy place and I wish to share one: the water that flowed from the rock for the thirsty people through the intercession of Moses. “Behold, I will stand before you on the rock, on Horeb; you will beat on the rock; water will come out and the people will drink” (Ex 17:6).

I do not comment on the dramatic context narrated in the Exodus, but I emphasize only 4 aspects worthy of attention: Moses, mediator between God the Father and the people; the rock that is beaten; the water that springs from it and that quenches the thirst; the needy and exhausted people. These are just simple aspects that speak to each of us and help us to reflect because the Word of God is eternal! (Is 55:9-12). There is no time for what is eternal and eternal is the dialogue between God and our soul. In this garden Jesus is the new and only Mediator who intercedes for the man past present and future, He Himself praying more intensely, with his knees bent and the drops of Blood falling to the ground (Lk 22:44) strikes this Rock. The saving action that flows from it, the supreme offering of the Son of God, born in the Upper Room, suffered HERE and accomplished on Calvary is the water that quenches the souls of every time! We are all involved and challenged.

Our prayer, explicitly requested by the Lord in this holy place, expresses all the strength and importance in two meanings: it is like a wave of His GRACE that becomes refreshment and new vital breath of needy souls and at the same time it becomes an imperative of God and a warning to the evil one and all his followers, who makes them retreat in their wicked plans of adversity to God and to humanity. We invite you to come spiritually HERE in prayer. In our worship or in whatever way we can pray, we too "beat" with our knees the Rock of our salvation (Ps 94:1).
Dear friends of Gethsemane, may the Lord give you his peace!

In this Lenten season we are invited by the Lord to intensify our prayer in view of Easter, the summit of our Faith. The first Thursday of April will in fact be Holy Thursday! From this holy place, where we are all called, our prayer takes on strength and meaning in the Lord’s prayer: we help him in the mystery of Redemption. How? Certainly not according to our strengths and abilities, but invoking his precious Blood that this sacred Rock welcomed in its “palm”. It reminds me of a well-known episode: the liberation of the chosen people from the slavery of Egypt, the memorial of the Passover (Ex 12). Every Israelite family had to shed some of the blood of the lamb on the doorposts. This was the sign for the angel of death who, seeing it, would not stop, but would pass over, saving the people of the Lord (Ex 12, 7-13). Also in this sacred story we find: 1) the people threatened and subdued; 2) the evil represented by Pharaoh of Egypt; 3) God who delivers and saves; 4) through the blood of the lamb.

Great theologians are not needed to understand the strength of what, HERE, our Lord Jesus Christ, innocent Lamb, accomplishes in his consent to the Father “Thy will be done” (Lk 22:42). It is the real Passover!

I ask myself together with you: what can that ‘sign’ of blood sprinkled on the doorjambs mean? Is it a physical reference in the strict sense? Are the doors of our houses where we enter and go out? It would be a too simplistic interpretation! I find a thought consoling: the doorjambs, those doors on which must be ‘shed’ the ‘sign’ of his Blood are each of us. It is the “garment of our soul” made white by the Blood of the Lamb! (Rev 7:14). It is our forehead, our heart, our shoulders, in the sign of the only Cross that saves us. And the Lord Jesus is as if he were telling us again: “For this reason I was born and came into the world, for you and your salvation... listen to my voice” (cf. Jn 18:37).

As we recite a beautiful prayer, in this special month, we invoke this sublime Gift of his and say: “Behold, I receive you, O Blood of my Jesus, and I pour you out upon the Church, upon the world, upon sinners, upon purgatory...” over all of humanity.