

## *Holy Hour on Thursday of Easter Week*



Each year on the evening of Holy Thursday the Franciscan community joins together with all the faithful who come to Jerusalem for Easter “to watch and pray” for an hour along with Jesus.

The Gospel passages are read aloud in Arabic, Hebrew, German, English, Spanish, Italian and numerous other languages at the very spot where Jesus, before his arrest, sweated blood and abandoned himself to the will of the Father and to his fate of suffering and humiliation.

The celebration recalls the three principal moments of the Passion:  
Jesus’ foretelling of Peter’s denial (Matt 26:30-35; Mark 14:26-31; Luke 22:31-37);  
The agony of Christ and his prayer in the Garden of Olives (Luke 22:39-46; Matt 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-42);  
The arrest by the guards (Matt 26:47-56; Mark 14:43-52; Luke 22:47-54).

At the beginning of Holy Hour the Father Custos sprinkles red rose petals on the bare rock exposed in front of the altar and bends forward to kiss it. The petals recall the drops of blood that the Lord sweated on that night. The reading of the Gospel passages is accompanied by several psalms and prayers. The three moments are

separated by brief intervals of silence and personal prayer. At the end of the celebrations all the faithful bow down to touch and kiss the venerated rock, before beginning a torchlight procession along the Kidron Valley towards the Church of St. Peter in Gallicantu, the place where the house of the high priest Caiaphas stood and where Jesus was brought to pass the night in prison.