

THE SEVEN SORROWS OF MARY

First Sorrow:

The Prophecy of Simeon

From the Gospel according to St. Luke:

When the days were completed for their purification according to the Law of Moses, they took Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord (...) Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. This man was righteous and devout, awaiting the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Messiah of the Lord.

He came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to perform the custom of the Law in regard to Him, he took Him into his arms and blessed God, saying:

“Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace, according to Your word, for my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You prepared in the sight of all the peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel”.

The child's father and Mother were amazed at what was said about Him; and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary His Mother: “Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted; and you yourself a sword will pierce, so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. (Luke 2:22-35)

To suffer, to feel pain, to be despised, humiliated, to go about with a wounded and tearful heart – this was indeed something terribly inhumane!

Or perhaps without suffering we would not be completely human? Would we not have the right to reach out for love, happiness, and heaven?

In times of suffering, when faced with our Cross, by uniting ourselves with Jesus – this is when we precisely become even more our true selves.

At Nazareth, through His Angel, God announced to Mary news of great joy: “Behold, you will conceive and bear a Son...,” you will be the Mother of a King, “and of His kingdom there will be no end.” (Luke 2:34)

Mary, help me to believe, even when my reason fails me. Your sensitive heart, pierced by a sword of sorrow, uniting itself already beforehand with Jesus in His suffering, wishes to be united with the heart of each one of us.

Through Your Immaculate Heart, we wish, like you, to surrender ourselves unconditionally and with complete trust into the hands of our Heavenly Father, believing that “all things work for good for those who love God.” (Romans 8:28). Amen.



Second Sorrow:
The Flight into Egypt

From the Gospel according to St. Matthew:

When they [the Magi from the East] had departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you. Herod is going to search for the child to destroy Him.

Joseph rose and took the child and His mother by night and departed to Egypt. He stayed there until the death of Herod, that what the Lord had said through the prophet might be fulfilled, "Out of Egypt I called my Son."

When Herod realized that he had been deceived by the Magi, he became furious.

He ordered the massacre of all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had ascertained from the Magi. Then was fulfilled what had been said through Jeremiah the prophet: “A voice was heard in Ramah, sobbing and loud lamentation; Rachel weeping for her children, and she would not be consoled, since they were no more.” (Matthew 2:13-18).

The journey to Bethlehem in the last days of her pregnancy, the birth of the child in a strange setting, without the feeling of security or the support of loved ones – there was no end to her problems. Herod was out for blood, so she had to flee at night, again into the unknown... the next step of her pilgrimage.

We know very well the taste of life for those who emigrate – a foreign language, a foreign culture, when often

we have to leave behind all the ones we love and everything we like. The life of every person is a constant pilgrimage, and we learn from Mary what is most important on this path: more important than the feeling of security and our own plans is discerning and fulfilling the will of God

Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done unto me according to Your word - during the Annunciation, Mary acknowledged and then throughout her whole life allowed herself to be led where Divine Providence summoned her to follow. This is why we entrust our families, our plans, our salvation, to you, o Mary!

We wish to let ourselves be led by the Holy Spirit, and to surrender to Him control over what we consider as “ours,” especially those people entrusted to our care: our spouses, children, friends, and neighbors.

They are above all children of our Good Father in Heaven, and You, Mary, are their Mother... Lead us on our daily pilgrimage to our Father's house!
Amen.



Third Sorrow:
The Loss of Jesus

From the Gospel according to St. Luke:

Each year His parents went to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, and when He was twelve years old, they went up according to festival custom.

After they had completed its days, as they were returning, Jesus remained behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. Thinking that He was in the caravan, they journeyed for a day and looked for Him among their relatives and acquaintances, but not finding Him, they returned to Jerusalem to look for Him. After three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions, and all who heard Him were astounded at His understanding

and His answers. When His parents saw Him, they were astonished, and His mother said to Him, “Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been looking for You with great anxiety.

And He said to them, “Why were you looking for Me? Did you not know that I must be in My Father’s house?”

But they did not understand what He said to them (...) and His mother kept all these things in her heart.”

(Luke 2:41-50)

Faith often means “looking for God with pain in our heart.” How often, when we think that we understand something, that we have achieved something, that we stand strongly on our own two feet, our self-assuredness collapses like a house of cards, and our weakness and inability to cope gives us our next lesson in humility.

Mary looked for Jesus with pain in her heart, and this was not because she had previously rejected Him by her sins. Such is Jesus, that He is always in the place where the will and glory of the Father leads Him. For us it is so difficult to look for the glory of the Father, for we seek our own... It is so difficult to discern and fulfill the will of the Father. Our own will in the end seems to be better, less complicated.

Let us learn from Mary to keep looking and not give up! The way we have to look is not with lofty feelings and spiritual highs, but by fulfilling the will of the Father.

Mary gives us an example of how “to keep all these things in our heart,” that is to discern the meaning of our daily concerns in the light of faith and God’s Word.

Finally, it is worth reminding ourselves that our spiritual feelings and emotions do not at all attest to the deepness of our faith; it is unwavering trust in His Word and promises that gives us this assurance.



For just as beautiful feelings and uplifting emotions are no proof of God's nearness, in the same way, spiritual dryness, suffering, and the darkness of faith in no way mean that God has abandoned us.

He is always near us, in the deepest interior castle of our soul. He first looks for our love, is faithful, and never gives up on us.

He is near, even if on the level of the senses (feelings and emotions) we experience Him as hidden and absent.

Mary, Queen of the Faithful,
- pray for us! Amen.

Fourth sorrow:

Meeting on the Way of the Cross

From the Second Letter of St. Peter:

But if you are patient when you suffer, this is a grace before God. For to this you have been called, because

Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in His footsteps. He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth. When he was insulted, he returned no insult; when He suffered, He did not threaten; instead, He handed Himself over to the one who judges justly. He Himself bore our sins in His body upon the cross, so that free from sin, we might live for righteousness – By His Blood you have been healed.” (1 Peter 2:19-24)

“Follow Christ, in His footsteps” – this is the vocation of every Christian. Each day Christ exhorts us: “Take up your cross and follow Me.”

Mary was not only the Mother of Jesus, but she was also His first disciple. Every sorrow, which like a sword pierced Her Immaculate Heart, was a further lesson in this school of spirituality, and in a special way was a co-participation in the Cross of Her Son.

Yet it was our infirmities that He bore, our sufferings that he endured, while we thought of Him as stricken, as one smitten by God and afflicted – so the prophet Isaiah foretold the Lord's Passion – But He was pierced for our offenses, crushed for our sins. Upon Him was the chastisement that makes us whole, by His stripes we are healed. We had all gone astray like sheep, each following his own way; but the Lord laid upon Him the guilt of us all. (53:4-6).

“To bear the sufferings of another” may not immediately require from us that we give up our life.

At times, it is simply a matter of giving up a few minutes of our time, of our attention for another. This the capacity for empathy for listening with respect to what another person wants to communicate to us, without judging, without offering “golden advice.”

At other times, it means, like Simon of Cyrene, to walk together in bearing a common burden, or like Veronica, to support a person with a small gesture which is evidence that we see, that not everything is indifferent to us, that we don't pay attention to what "people will say."

O Mary, who with a sorrowful heart accompanied Jesus on His Way of the Cross, teach us to accompany our neighbors, teach us to be present the way you were: by a presence which supports, suffers their pain, shares their burdens, is full of empathy, brings back their dignity and imparts true hope. Amen.



Fifth sorrow:

Crucifixion and death of Jesus

From the Gospel according to St. Matthew:

“And about three o’clock, Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “*Eli, Eli lema sabachthani?*” which means, “My God, my God why have you forsaken me?” (...) But Jesus cried out again in a loud voice, and gave up His spirit.”

(Matthew 27:45; 50)

Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit” (John 12:24) – in these words, Jesus encapsulated His entire mission. He died like the seed, but thanks to His Incarnation, Passion, and Death on the Cross, He brought forth “much fruit.”

Death was not the end, it was not a defeat. Jesus rises from the dead, and in

his triumph over sin, death, and Satan, he gives all of us the gift of reconciliation with God and eternal life.

In the final moments of His life, **when Jesus saw His mother and the disciple there whom He loved, He said to His mother, “Woman, behold your son.” Then He said to the disciple, “Behold your mother.” And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.”** (John 19:25-27).

We so much need to take Mary into our home, we need her presence, especially when, in following Jesus, we become the grain of wheat which dies. The loss of someone close to us, a family tragedy, the failure to carry out our plans and fulfill our life's dreams, and other difficult moments when we feel betrayed, abandoned, crucified, when something deep in our heart irreversibly dies in us – this is when we

need the intercession and protection of Mary, in order to persevere.

O Mary, be always with us, especially in our times of darkness, in moments of temptation, spiritual perplexity, disappointment, and doubt.

Be near us when we grapple with our inability to forgive, when we lack faith in God's Providence. We wish always, like Jesus, to be obedient to the will of the Father in all things and pray "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

May your presence remind us that death, sin, and evil do not have the final word, that the final word always belongs to Your Son. You knew this, as you were standing by the Cross with a heart full of sorrow, and that is why the immensity of the cruelty and pain you bore was not transformed into despair, because you never lost hope.



Sixth sorrow:

Jesus taken down from the Cross

From the Gospel according to St. John:

Now since it was Preparation Day, in order that the bodies might not remain on the cross on the Sabbath, for the Sabbath day of that week was a solemn one – the Jews asked Pilate that their legs be broken and they be taken down.

So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and then of the other one who was crucified with Jesus.

But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs, but one soldier thrust his lance into His side, and immediately blood and water flowed out. (John 19:31-34)

From the pierced side of Jesus flow blood and water, the proof of His death.

The whole tradition of the Church sees in this event also a symbolic meaning: the birth of the Church. Just as in Paradise, while Adam was sleeping, God formed Eve from his side, from his rib, so from the side of Jesus, the “new Adam,” is born the “new Eve” – the Church, the Spouse of Christ.

St. John Chrysostom taught us directly that the pierced side of Christ is the fountain of all graces, the grace of our life in the Church. He wrote: “Immediately blood and water flowed out. It is not a coincidence that these two fountains flowed out precisely at that time. The blood and water after all constitute the elements that form the Church: rebirth in the waters of Baptism and in the Eucharistic nourishment from the Body and Blood of Christ. All of the Christian mysteries (sacraments) derive from this source. When therefore your lips approach this

chalice (when you receive Holy Communion), do so as if you were partaking of the Most Precious Blood flowing from the side of Christ Himself.”

Wherever the Church gathers, Mary, the Spouse of the Holy Spirit, is always present, from the moment of the Annunciation to the Descent of the Holy Spirit. And in between these joyful events, the moment when the soldier pierces the heart of Her Son with a lance, when they place His dead body in her arms. What a tragic juxtaposition of joy and suffering, of a shout of thanksgiving and of silence full of bitter sadness. But such is the Gospel, we cannot accept only what we choose to like, for every attempt to gloss over the truth or simply compromise only deepens our darkness.

We wish, like You, to be faithful to Jesus to the end, and not feel ashamed by the scandal of the Cross.

We know that the one who wants to find Christ without accepting His Cross will find only an empty cross without Christ, without His love and graces.

Mary, Queen of Apostles, pray for us!



Seventh sorrow:
Jesus is laid in the tomb

From the Gospel according to St. John:

Joseph of Arimathea, secretly a disciple of Jesus for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate if he could remove the body of Jesus. And Pilate permitted it.

So he came and took His body. Nicodemus, the one who had first come to Him at night, also came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes weighing about one hundred pounds.

They took the body of Jesus and bound it with burial cloths along with the spices, according to the Jewish burial custom. Now in the place where He had been crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had yet been buried.

So they laid Jesus there because of the Jewish Preparation Day; for the tomb was close by. (John 19:38-42)

As the dead body of Her Son was being laid in the tomb, Mary could no longer do anything about it. She is not in position to bring Him back to life, she can't turn back the clock.

The washing of the body, the anointing with oil performed in haste are the first moments of mourning.

It seems as if nothing important is happening anymore, the crowds have dispersed, the apostles fled, and amid the darkness there is just a handful of the most faithful few. Could there be a more overwhelming picture of defeat, of tragedy? Did hope itself die?

And yet at this time something great is accomplished: Christ brings salvation to the dead.

In his First Letter, St. Peter writes: **For Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the sake of the unrighteous, that he might lead you to God. Put to death in the flesh, He was brought to**

life in the spirit. In it He also went to preach salvation to the spirits in prison, who had once been disobedient.”
(1 Peter 3:18-20)

Jesus Christ truly died, He experienced death like every person, and went to the dwelling of the dead, so that in that place, as the victor over death, he might proclaim salvation to all those who had died before Him.

The tomb of Jesus is empty down to this very day. From the moment when Jesus rose from the dead, every grave of the believer is only a turn signal, an announcement of new life, for if we die with Christ, “we believe also that we will live with Him.” (Romans 6:11)

O Mary, you who “hoped against hope,” be our protection and help in those situations where, humanly speaking, we can do nothing, when we lose all our support and hope.

We entrust to you all our deceased loved ones, all the souls in Purgatory.

Mary, Queen of the Holy Scapular
- pray for us! Amen.



Chaplet of the Seven Sorrows of Mary (Supplement)

In 1982, the Virgin Mary appeared to three girls in Kibeho in Rwanda (Africa). During the apparitions of March 3, she encouraged them to pray a new form of the rosary: The Chaplet (“Rosary”) of the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary.

She encouraged us to pray this chaplet especially on Tuesdays (because her first appearance took place on this day) and Fridays (the day already connected by tradition with meditation on the Lord’s Passion).

During another apparition, on May 31, Mary said: “I ask that you pray for forgiveness. If you will pray this chaplet, meditating devoutly on it, you will find strength within yourself to return to God. In our time, people no longer even ask for forgiveness. And thus they continue to crucify the Son of God.”

The Chaplet of the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary consists of seven mysteries, in which we meditate on the “seven sorrows”, the most painful moments from the life of Mary.

Each mystery is comprised of: 1 Our Father, 7 Hail Mary's and 1 Glory be...

First Mystery:

The Prophecy of Simeon

Dearest Savior, strengthen us by Your grace, that we may remain faithful children of Your Mother. /Our Father/Hail Mary – 7x/ Glory be... - the prayers for each mystery.

Second Mystery:

The Flight into Egypt

Mary, help us to see at our side Jesus Christ – God's Son and Yours, so that what seems incomprehensible – might become comprehensible.

Third Mystery:

**The Search for the Lord Jesus,
who stayed behind in the Temple**

Mary, looking for Your Son! Help us to discover Jesus in our own life!

Fourth Mystery:

**The Meeting with the Lord Jesus
carrying His cross**

They nailed Your Son to the cross for our sins. Help us always to see His Divine Mercy, avoid sin, and rise up from our falls.

Fifth Mystery:

**The death of the Lord Jesus
on the cross**

Mary, you are suffering because of our sins. We believe, that the death of Your Son opened for us the way to our salvation.

Sixth Mystery:

The Body of Jesus

is Taken Down from the cross

Mary, your love is more powerful than death! Obtain for us a share in His Resurrection.

Seventh Mystery:

The Lord Jesus is laid in the tomb

Mary, help us with the eyes of faith to look beyond the grave. Help us to look upon death in such a way that we may not lose the meaning of life.

Conclusion:

In honor of the tears which the Blessed Virgin Mary poured out during these mysteries and to request the graces of the indulgence attached to this prayer – 3 Hail Mary's.