

The Chaplet (Little Rosary) of the Seven Sorrows

Make an Act of Contrition

MONDAY

V. O God, come to my assistance.

R. O Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory be ...

The First Sorrow of Mary

St. Simeon's Prophecy

In the Temple, St. Simeon had received the Divine Child in his arms and predicted that this Child would be a sign (of God) which shall be contradicted by men. "Behold this Child is set ... for a sign which shall be contradicted. And Thy own soul a sword shall pierce" (Lk. 2:34-35).

Meditation

The Blessed Virgin told St. Matilda that when St. Simeon pronounced these words "all Her joy was changed into sorrow." For, as was revealed to St. Teresa, although the Blessed Mother already knew that the life of Her Son would be sacrificed for the salvation of the world, She then learned more distinctly and in greater detail what sufferings and what a cruel death awaited Him. She knew that He would be persecuted and opposed in every way.

He would be opposed in His teaching: instead of being believed, He would be called a blasphemer for claiming to be the Son of God. The reprobate Caiphas was to say: "He hath blasphemed ... He is guilty of death" (Mt. 26:65-66). He would be opposed in His reputation: for though He was of noble, even of royal descent, He was despised as a peasant: "Is not this the carpenter's son?" (Mt. 13:55). "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?" (Mk. 6:3). He was Wisdom itself, and was treated as ignorant: "How doth this man know letters, having never learned?" (Jn. 7:15). As a false prophet: "And they blindfolded Him, and smote His face ... saying: Prophecy, who is it that struck Thee?" (Lk. 22:64). He was treated as a madman: "He is mad, why hear you him?" (Jn. 10:20). As a drunkard, a glutton, and a friend of sinners: "Behold a man that is a glutton, and a drinker of wine, a friend of publicans and sinners" (Lk. 7:34). As a sorcerer: "By the prince of devils he casteth out devils"(Mt. 9:34). As a heretic and one possessed by the evil spirit: "Do not we say well that Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?" (Jn. 8:48). In short, Jesus was considered so notoriously wicked that, as the Jews said to Pilate, no

trial was necessary to condemn Him. “If He were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered Him up to thee” (Jn. 18:30).

One Our Father ... Seven Hail Mary's ...

Verse: My Mother! share Thy grief with me, and let me bear Thee company to mourn Thy Jesus' death with Thee.

TUESDAY

V. O God, come to my assistance.

R. O Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory be ...

“Let us now consider the second sword of sorrow which wounded Mary, the flight of Her Infant Jesus into Egypt to escape the persecution by Herod.”

Second Sorrow of Mary

The Flight of Jesus into Egypt

Meditation

Having heard that the long-awaited Messiah had been born, Herod foolishly feared that He would deprive him of his kingdom. Herod waited to hear from the holy Magi where the young King was born, and planned to take His life. When he found he had been deceived, he ordered all the infants in the neighborhood of Bethlehem to be put to death. It was at that time that the angel appeared in a dream to St. Joseph and told him: “Arise, and take the Child and His Mother, and flee into Egypt” (Mt. 2:13). No sooner is Jesus born than He is persecuted. Mary began to realize that Simeon’s prophecy regarding Her Son was beginning to be fulfilled.

What anguish the realization of the impending exile must have caused Mary. It is easy to imagine that Mary must have suffered on the journey. The distance to Egypt was considerable: three hundred miles, requiring a journey of up to thirty days. The road was rough, unknown and little travelled. It was winter time, so that they had to make their way through snow, rain and wind, over rough and dirty roads. Where could they have slept on such a journey, especially on the two hundred miles of desert? They lived in Egypt seven years. They were strangers — unknown, without money, and barely able to support themselves by the work of their hands. Landolph of Saxony has written (and let this be a consolation to the poor) that Mary lived there in such poverty that there were times when She did not have even a crust of bread to give Her Son when He was

hungry. The thought of Jesus and Mary wandering as fugitives through a strange land teaches us that we must also live as pilgrims here below, detached from the material things that the world offers, and which we must soon leave to enter eternity. It also teaches us to embrace crosses, for we cannot live in this world without them. Let us make Mary happy by welcoming Her Son into our hearts, the Son whom men still continue to persecute by their sins.

One Our Father ... Seven Hail Mary's ... Verse ...

WEDNESDAY

V. O God, come to my assistance.

R. O Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory be ...

The Third Sorrow of Mary

The Loss of Jesus in the Temple

The third sorrow was one of the greatest that Mary had to endure in Her life, the loss of Her Son in the temple. Having lost Her Son for three days, She was deprived of His most sweet presence.

Meditation

What anxiety this broken-hearted Mother must have felt during those three days when She searched everywhere for Her Son, and asked for Him as the spouse did in the Canticles: Have you seen him, whom my soul loveth? (Cant. 3:3). This third sorrow of Mary ought to serve in the first place as a consolation to souls who are desolate, and who no longer enjoy, as they once enjoyed, the sweet presence of the Lord. They may weep, but they should weep confidently, just as Mary wept over the loss of Her Son. But whoever wants to find Jesus must look for Him as Mary did, not amid the pleasures and delights of the world, but amid crosses and mortifications. "We sought Thee sorrowing," Mary said to Her Son. Let us learn then from Mary, to seek Jesus. Moreover, we should look for no other good in this world than Jesus. St. Augustine says that Job "had lost what God had given him, but not God Himself." If Mary wept over the loss of Her Son for three days, how much more should sinners weep who have lost sanctifying grace. To them God says: "You are not My people, and I will not be yours" (Os. 1:9). For this is the effect of sin: it separates the soul from God. "Your iniquities have divided between you and your God" (Isa. 59:2). Sinners may possess all the

wealth in the world, but inasmuch as they have lost God, everything in this world becomes a source of affliction to them, as Solomon confessed: "Behold all is vanity, and vexation of spirit" (Eccles. 1:14).

One Our Father ... Seven Hail Mary's ... Verse ...

THURSDAY

V. O God, come to my assistance.

R. O Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory be ...

The Fourth Sorrow of Mary

The Meeting of Mary with Jesus on the Way to Calvary

The greater Her love for Him, the greater Her grief at the sight of His sufferings, especially when She met Him on that dolorous way, dragging His cross to the place of execution. This is the fourth sorrow on which we have to meditate.

Meditation

"O sorrowful Mother," exclaimed St. John, "Your Son has now been condemned to death; He has already set out on the road to Calvary, carrying His own cross. Come, if You desire to see Him and say farewell to Him, as He passes through the streets." Mary goes along with St. John. While She waited for Her Son to come along, how much must She have heard said by the Jews (who soon recognized Her), against Her beloved Son, and perhaps even mockery against Herself. What a frightening picture as the nails, the hammers, the ropes and all the fatal instruments that were to put an end to Her Son's life were paraded by.

But now the implements, the executioners, have all passed by. Mary raised Her eyes, and saw, O God!, a young man all covered with blood and wounds from head to foot, a wreath of thorns on His head, and carrying two heavy beams on His shoulders. She gazed at Him, but hardly recognized Him. The wounds, the bruises, and the clotted blood gave Him the appearance of a leper, so that He could no longer be recognized. According to St. Bridget, Jesus wiped away the clotted blood which prevented Him from seeing Mary. The Mother and the Son looked at each other. And their looks became as so many arrows to pierce those hearts which loved each other so tenderly. Even though the sight of Her dying Son was to cost Her such bitter sorrow, Mary would not leave Him. The Mother also took up Her cross and followed Him, to be crucified along with

Him. Let us pity Her, and accompany Her and Her Son by patiently carrying the cross
Our Lord imposes on us.

One Our Father ... Seven Hail Mary's ... Verse ...

FRIDAY

V. O God, come to my assistance.

R. O Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory be ...

The Fifth Sorrow of Mary

The Death of Jesus

“There stood by the cross of Jesus, His Mother” (Jn. 19:25). St. John did not feel it necessary to say more than these words with reference to the martyrdom of Mary. Picture Her now at the foot of the cross beside Her dying Son, and then ask yourself if there can ever be sorrow like Her sorrow. Remain for a while on Calvary and consider the fifth sword which transfixed the heart of Mary — the death of Jesus.

Meditation

As soon as our agonized Redeemer had reached Mount Calvary, the executioners stripped Him of His clothes, and piercing His hands and feet with nails, they fastened Him on the cross. They raised the cross and left Him to die. The executioners left Him, but not Mary. She came up close to the cross to be near Him in death. “I did not leave Him,” She revealed to St. Bridget, “but stood nearer the cross.”

Ah, true Mother, most loving Mother, Whom not even the fear of death could separate from Thy beloved Son. But, O God, what a spectacle of sorrow must have confronted those who could see Jesus hanging in agony on the cross, and His Mother there at the foot of the cross suffering all His torments with Him. All these sufferings of Jesus were also Mary’s sufferings. Saint Jerome says, *“Every torture inflicted on the body of Jesus, was a wound in the heart of His Mother.”* *“Anyone who had been present then on Mount Calvary, would have seen two altars on which two great sacrifices were being offered: the one in the body of Jesus — the other in the heart of Mary.”* (St. John Chrysostom)
One Our Father ... Seven Hail Mary's ... Verse ...

SATURDAY

V. O God, come to my assistance.

R. O Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory be ...

The Sixth Sorrow of Mary

The Piercing of the Side of Jesus, and His Descent from the Cross

We must now consider the sixth sorrow which weighed upon the heart of Our Blessed Lady. On this day, You will be wounded with another sword of sorrow. A cruel lance will pierce the side of Your dead Son, and You will receive Him in Your arms after He has been taken down from the cross.

Meditation

It is enough to tell a mother that her son is dead to arouse in her heart all her love for the dead child. *“One of the soldiers with a spear opened His side, and immediately there came out blood and water”* (Jn. 19:34). *“Christ,”* says the devout Lanspergius, *“shared this wound with His Mother. He received the hurt; His Mother endured the pain.”*

Mary’s sufferings were so great that it was only through the miraculous intervention of God that She did not die. When She suffered before, She at least had Her Son to pity Her; but now She had no Son to commiserate with Her. Jesus was taken down from the cross, the afflicted Mother waiting with outstretched arms to take Her beloved Son. She embraced Him and then sat down at the foot of the cross. Her Son died for men, men still continue to torture and crucify Him by their sins. Let us resolve not to torment our sorrowful Mother any longer. And if we have saddened Her in the past by our sins, let us now do what She wants us to do.

One Our Father ... Seven Hail Mary’s ... Verse ...

SUNDAY

V. O God, come to my assistance.

R. O Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory be ...

The Seventh Sorrow of Mary

The Burial of Jesus

Let us meditate now on Mary's last sword of sorrow. She has witnessed the death of Her Son on the cross. She has embraced His lifeless body for the last time. Now She has to leave Him in the tomb.

Meditation

In order to grasp the meaning of this last sorrow more fully, let us return to Calvary and picture our afflicted Mother there, still holding the lifeless body of Her Son clasped in Her arms. The disciples, afraid that Mary may die of grief, approach and take the body of Jesus from Her arms to bury it. With reverence they lift it from Her arms, embalm it with aromatic herbs, and wrap it in a shroud they have already prepared. The mournful procession sets out for the tomb. The afflicted Mother follows Her Son to His last resting place. When it was time to move the stone to close the entrance, the grief-stricken disciples approached Our Blessed Lady and said to Her: "It is time now, O Lady, to close the tomb. Forgive us; look at Thy Son once more, and say goodbye to Him for the last time."

Finally, they took the stone and sealed off the sacred Body of Jesus in the sepulcher, that Body which is the greatest treasure there can possibly be on earth or in Heaven. Mary left Her heart in the tomb of Jesus, because Jesus was Her whole treasure: "*For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also*" (Lk. 12:34). After speaking Her last farewell to Her Son, She left and returned to Her home. Mary was so desolate and so sad that, according to St. Bernard, She, "moved many to tears." In fact, wherever She passed, those who saw Her could not help weeping with Her. St. Bernard also says that the holy disciples and women who accompanied Her "mourned even more for Her than for their Lord."

One Our Father ... Seven Hail Mary's ... Verse ...

Hail, Holy Queen ...

Let us pray

O God, at whose Passion, according to the prophecy of Simeon, a sword of sorrow did pierce through the most sweet soul of the glorious Virgin and Mother Mary; grant that we, who commemorate and reverence Her sorrows, may experience the blessed effect of Thy Passion, Who livest and reignest world without end. *Amen.*

Three Hail Mary's in honor of the tears shed by Our Lady in Her Sorrows.