

crowned with thorns, streaming with blood, bearing His heavy cross. Ah, consider, my soul, the grief of the blessed Virgin thus beholding her Son! Who would not weep at seeing this Mother's grief? But who has been the cause of such woe? I, it is I, who with my sins have so cruelly wounded the heart of my sorrowing Mother! And yet I am not moved; I am as a stone when my heart should break because of my ingratitude.

5. **The Crucifixion:** "They crucified Him. Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, His Mother. When Jesus therefore had seen His Mother and the disciple standing whom he loved, He saith to His Mother: Woman: behold thy son. After that he saith to the disciple: Behold thy Mother" (John XIX: 18, 25-27).

Meditation: Look, devout soul, look to Calvary, whereon are raised two altars of sacrifice, one on the body of Jesus, the other on the heart of Mary. Sad is the sight of that dear Mother drowned in a sea of woe, seeing her beloved Son, part of her very self, cruelly nailed to the shameful tree of the cross. Ah me! How every blow of the hammer, how every stripe which fell on the Savior's form, fell also on the disconsolate spirit of the Virgin. As she stood at the foot of the cross, pierced by the sword of sorrow, she turned her eyes on Him, until she knew that He lived no longer and had resigned His spirit to His Eternal Father. Then her own soul was like to have left the body and joined itself to that of Jesus.

6. **The taking down of the Body of Jesus from the Cross:** "Joseph of Arimathea, a noble counselor, came and went in boldly to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. And Joseph buying fine linen, and taking Him down, wrapped Him up in the fine linen" (Mark XV: 43-46).

Meditation: Consider the most bitter sorrow which rent the soul of Mary, when she saw the dead body of her dear Jesus on her knees, covered with blood, all torn with deep wounds. O mournful Mother, a bundle of myrrh, indeed is thy Beloved to thee. Who would not pity thee? Whose heart would not be softened, seeing affliction which would move a stone? Behold John not to be comforted, Magdalen and the other Mary in deep affliction, an Nicodemus, who can scarcely bear her sorrow.

7. **The Burial of Jesus:** "Now there was in the place where He was crucified, a garden; and in the garden a new sepulcher, wherein no man yet had been laid. There, therefore, because of the parasceve of the Jews, they laid Jesus, because the sepulcher was nigh at hand" (John XIX: 41-42).

Meditation: Consider the sighs which burst from Mary's sad heart when she saw her beloved Jesus laid within the tomb. What grief was hers when she saw the stone lifted to cover that sacred tomb! She gazed a last time on the lifeless body of her Son, and could scarce detach her eyes from those gaping wounds. And when the great stone was rolled to the door of the sepulcher, oh, then indeed her heart seemed torn from her body!

*(excerpted from: <http://olrl.org>)

Note: If we come to the liturgy of Lent, Holy Week and Easter without a sustained meditation on the sufferings of Jesus and Mary, we are highly unlikely to value them properly. That is why we have devotions like the Way of the Cross, Mary's Way of the Cross, the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary and the Lent of Our Lady. Hymns, psalms, readings, and prayers will assist us powerfully to enter into the living personalities of Jesus and Mary and their passing over from life through death and back to life again, for us and our salvation.



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Our Lady of Sorrows

(The Seven Sorrows of the Blessed Virgin Mary)

SEPTEMBER 15



*Dear Mother of Sorrows,
... let me mingle tears with thee,
mourning Him who mourned for me,
all the days that I may live ...
(Stabat Mater - v.12)*

Our Lady of Sorrows

*Devotion to the Sorrows of Mary has always been a favorite devotion among Catholics. It has been sanctioned by the Church and introduced into the Missal and Breviary. In order to keep before our minds the inexpressible sufferings endured for us by the Mother of God while she lived here on earth with her Divine Son, the Church observes two feasts in honor of the Seven Dolours of Mary; one on the Friday before Good Friday and the other on September 15th. She has enriched with numerous indulgences the Rosary of the Seven Dolours, as well as a number of other devotions to the Mother of Sorrows. How touching is the beautiful hymn, *Stabat Mater Dolorosa*, which the Church intertwines with the public recitation of the Way of the Cross. The Church spares no pain to induce her children to venerate the sufferings of their Heavenly Mother. Seven of her sorrows have been chosen for our special veneration. Holy Church recalls to our mind only seven of Our Lady's Dolours, but who could form an estimate of their real number! The sufferings of the Mother of God cannot be comprehended; they are inconceivable. But although her whole life was, like that of her Divine Son, a continuous series of sufferings and tribulations, the greatest woes and trials came to her during the week of the bitter passion and death of Jesus, when the storm of hatred and fury burst forth with all violence against Him. The precise object of the devotion to Our Lady of Sorrows consists of a heartfelt and sincere compassion for the Sorrows which the most holy Virgin endured through her whole life, especially for her long martyrdom, which began with the prophecy of holy Simeon and was consummated on Calvary.

Devotion to the sorrows of Mary should be practiced especially by souls who wish to rid themselves of sinful habits. This devotion nourishes the spirit of compunction, affords great consolation, strengthens confidence in God's mercy, draws down the special protection of the Blessed Mother in the hour of temptation and preserves the converted sinner from relapsing into sin. The Mother of God once said to her faithful servant St. Bridget: "No matter how numerous a person's sins may be, if he turns to me with a sincere purpose of amendment, I am prepared forthwith to receive him graciously, for I do not regard the number of sins he has committed, but look only upon the dispositions with which he comes to me; for I feel no aversion in healing his wounds because I am called and am in truth the Mother of Mercy." One of the gifts granted to those who have a devotion to the Dolours of Mary is the grace of a good and holy death. In recompense for her fidelity in remaining near to Jesus as He died on the Cross. Our Lady of Sorrows has received from Him a special power to assist souls in their last agony and no doubt she will above all exercise the power in behalf of those who have wept with her and compassionated her.

Our Lord once said to Veronica of Binasco: "My daughter, the tears which you shed in compassion for My sufferings are pleasing to Me, but bear in

mind that on account of My infinite love for My Mother, the tears you shed in compassion for her sufferings are still more precious."

SCRIPTURE QUOTES AND MEDITATIONS FOR EACH SORROW

- 1. The prophecy of Simeon:** "And Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary his mother: Behold this child is set for the fall and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted; And thy own soul a sword shall pierce, that out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed" (Luke II: 34-35)
Meditation: How great was the shock to Mary's Heart at hearing the sorrowful words, in which holy Simeon told the bitter Passion and death of her sweet Jesus, since in that same moment she realized in her mind all the insults, blows, and torments which the impious men were to offer to the Redeemer of the world. But a still sharper sword pierced her soul. It was the thought of men's ingratitude to her beloved Son. Now consider that because of your sins you are unhappily among the ungrateful.
- 2. The flight into Egypt:** "And after they (the wise men) were departed, behold an angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph, saying: Arise and take the child and His mother and fly into Egypt: and be there until I shall tell thee. For it will come to pass that Herod will seek the child to destroy Him. Who arose and took the child and His mother by night, and retired into Egypt: and He was there until the death of Herod" (Matt. II: 13-14).
Meditation: Consider the sharp sorrow which Mary felt when, St. Joseph being warned by an angel, she had to flee by night in order to preserve her beloved Child from the slaughter decreed by Herod. What anguish was hers in leaving Judea, lest she should be overtaken by the soldiers of the cruel king! How great her privations in that long journey! But consider how often you have renewed that bitter grief of Mary, when your sins have caused her Son to flee from your heart.
- 3. The loss of the Child Jesus in the temple:** "And having fulfilled the days, when they returned, the Child Jesus remained in Jerusalem; and His parents knew it not. And thinking that he was in the company, they came a day's journey, and sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. And not finding Him, they returned into Jerusalem, seeking Him" (Luke II: 43-45)
Meditation: How dread was the grief of Mary, when she saw that she had lost her beloved Son! And as if to increase her sorrow, when she sought Him diligently among her kinsfolk and acquaintance, she could hear no tidings of Him. No hindrances stayed her, nor weariness, nor danger; but she forthwith returned to Jerusalem, and for three long days sought Him sorrowing. Great be your confusion, O my soul, who has so often lost your Jesus by your sins, and has given no heed to seek Him at once, a sign that you make very little or no account of the precious treasure of divine love.
- 4. The meeting of Jesus and Mary on the Way of the Cross:** "And there followed Him a great multitude of people, and of women, who bewailed and lamented Him" (Luke XXIII: 27).
Meditation: Come, O ye sinners, come and see if ye can endure so sad a sight. This Mother, so tender and loving, meets her beloved Son, meets Him amid an impious rabble, who drag Him to a cruel death, wounded, torn by stripes,