

## DEVOTION TO OUR MOTHER OF SORROWS<sup>1</sup>



**V.** Lord, † open my lips. **R.** And my mouth shall declare Thy praise.

**V.** O God, † come to my assistance. **R.** O Lord, make haste to help me.

**V.** Glory be to the † Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost,

**R.** As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

### THE SHORT VERSION

#### First Sorrow: The Prophecy of Simeon, the High Priest. (Luke 2:34-35)

We compassionate thee, our Mother most sorrowful, in the affliction of thy tender heart at the prophecy of the holy and aged Simeon. Dearest Mother, by thy heart so afflicted, obtain for us the virtue of humility and the gift of holy fear of God.

We thank thee dearest Mother for accepting this sword, which for the next thirty three years, daily gives thee the vision of the brutalities, atrocities and savagery thy beloved Son will be inflicted with, on that scheduled first Good Friday. Alas, dearest Mother thou sufferest 12,045 Good Fridays until it fully transpires. Innocuous as this prophecy may seem at that time, little did mankind know that this is the most persistent and excruciating sorrow thou has to bear as our Co-Redemptrix. As the Queen of Prophets, little was left for thee to see as to the future violence Jesus will accept in the body and blood thou gave Him. A man in his lifetime might contemplate the self-same Passion of Jesus every Good Friday, but that only adds up to the number of years of his adulthood. His Good Fridays do not even come close to one percent of yours.

<sup>1</sup> Based on the Devotion approved by Pope Pius VII in 1815.

No wonder all the saints and ancient fathers were all unanimous in declaring that any man who takes an iota of thy sorrows will die. Thou dearest Mother was the only one who can take this ineffable sorrow fueled by thy love of God, thy Son and all of mankind. Dearest sorrowful Mother, forgive us who never understood what this prophecy did to thy most tender and loving heart. **Hail Mary... Our Mother of the Sorrowful Heart, Pray for us now at the hour of our death. Amen.**

### Second Sorrow: The Flight into Egypt (Matthew 2:13-14)

We compassionate thee, our Mother most sorrowful, in the anguish of thy most affectionate heart during thy escape into Egypt and thy sojourn there. Dearest Mother, by thy heart so troubled, obtain for us the virtue of generosity, especially towards the poor and the Gift of Piety.

We thank thee dearest Mother for accepting this sword filled with frightful uncertainties, apprehensions, discrimination, ostracism, rejection and wage theft in thy sojourn in this foreign land. **Hail Mary... Our Mother...**

### Third Sorrow: The Loss of The Child Jesus in the Temple. (Luke 2:43-45)

We compassionate thee, our Mother most sorrowful, in those anxieties which tried thy troubled heart at the loss of thy dear Jesus. Dearest Mother, by thy heart so full of anguish, obtain for us the virtue of chastity and the Gift of Knowledge.

We thank thee dearest Mother for accepting this sword full of worried anxiety and the unsettling sense of loss that knifed through thy heart for our salvation. **Hail Mary... Our Mother...**

### Fourth Sorrow: The Sorrowful Meeting of Jesus and Mary on His Way to Calvary.

We compassionate thee, our Mother most sorrowful, in the consternation of thy heart at meeting Jesus as He carried His Cross. Dearest Mother, by thy heart so troubled, obtain for us the virtue of patience and the Gift of Fortitude.

We thank thee dearest Mother for accepting this sword filled with the agonizing realization of the full extent of thy beloved Son's Passion for our salvation. **Hail Mary... Our Mother...**

### Fifth Sorrow: The Crucifixion and Death of Our Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross.

We compassionate thee, our Mother most sorrowful, in the martyrdom which thy generous heart endured in standing near Jesus in His agony and death. Dearest Mother, by thy afflicted heart in such wise, obtain for us the virtue of temperance and the Gift of Counsel.

We thank thee dearest Mother for receiving this sword that was thrust through thy heart as many times as the nails were hammered through Jesus' hands and feet, for our salvation. **Hail Mary... Our Mother...**

## Sixth Sorrow: The Taking Down of the Body of Jesus from the Cross.

We compassionate thee, our Mother most sorrowful, in the wounding of thy compassionate heart, when the lance struck the side of Jesus and pierced His heart before His body was lowered from the Cross. Dearest Mother, by thy heart thus transfixed, obtain for us the virtue of fraternal charity and the Gift of Understanding.

We thank thee dearest Mother for accepting this sword of inconsolable grief that rent thy heart for our salvation. **Hail Mary... Our Mother...**

## Seventh Sorrow: The Burial of Jesus.

We compassionate thee, our Mother most sorrowful, for the pangs that wrenched thy most loving heart at the burial of thy dear Jesus. Dearest Mother, by thy heart sunk in the bitterness of desolation, obtain for us the virtue of diligence and the Gift of Wisdom.

We thank thee dearest Mother, for accepting this sword that filled thy heart with gloomy loneliness, for our salvation. **Hail Mary... Our Mother...**

### Let Us Pray

LET INTERCESSION be made for us, we beseech Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, now and at the hour of our death, before the throne of Thy divine mercy, by the Blessed Virgin Mary, Thine and our Mother, whose compassionate heart was pierced by swords of sorrow since Thy Presentation in the Temple, and finally, on Calvary, her soul was grievously pierced by the bitter sword of Thy agonizing Passion and death; that we who reverently commemorate her sorrows, may worthily obtain the happy effect of Thy Passion. Who livest and reignest in unity with The Father and The Holy Ghost, One God, forever and ever. Amen.



## THE GOOD FRIDAY VERSION

### 1. THE PROPHECY OF SIMEON (Luke 2:34-35)

The atmosphere around the temple was filled with the festive air of pomp and pageantry. The multitude of families with their first-born are all arrayed in their bright holiday attires, filled with fervent anticipation in presenting their first-born to the God Most High as prescribed in the Scriptures. The Holy Family, Momma Mary, St. Joseph and Jesus were no different from the other families. This is the day of the Lord's recompense, and they were all eager to perform their duty. When their turn came to present Jesus to His Eternal Father, the high priest, Simeon, filled with the Holy Ghost, immediately recognized



the Messiah and praised God. Momma Mary was overjoyed upon hearing Simeon's canticle of praise but then his next words of prophecy were like ice water poured over her warm, joy-filled face, **"And thy own soul a sword shall pierce..."** (Luke 2:35). Immediately, she felt this sharp pointed pain in her heart, like a sword - the sword that would be the daily remembrance for the next 33 years of the suffering and atrocities Jesus would ultimately suffer on the first Good Friday in order to fulfill the

redemptive mission He has to complete for His Eternal Father. What a life! Sorrow reminded her 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year for the next 33 years. Who wants to live like this? Who wants to spend 33 years or 12,045 days sleeping each night and waking up the next day, contemplating, meditating and already living the future suffering and Passion of the Lamb of God? Who wants this kind of life?

Only our Momma Mary! She knows what she is getting into when she said to the Archangel Gabriel, **"be it done to me according to thy word."** (Lk. 1:38b). She knew that whosoever would be Messiah's mother would also be part of the Divine salvific plan of opening the doors of Heaven, closed temporarily by the disobedience of the first parents, Adam and Eve. Recalling her years in the temple, she remembers praying to God that she be granted the privilege of being the handmaid of the forthcoming mother of the prophesied Saviour. She recalls her surprise at the appearance of that seraphic angel, Gabriel, who announced that she would actually be the Messiah's mother, not the handmaid of the mother of the Messiah. Her words of acceptance were simple but filled the extreme joy of the realization that she actually is going to be the mother of the Messiah and the 'handmaid of God' spoken of in the Scriptures: **"Behold the handmaid of the Lord;"** (Lk. 1:38a)

Endowed by the Holy Ghost with His gifts, beatitudes and fruits since her conception plus augmented by her studies while in the temple for 10 years, she knew the true meaning of the Scriptures, particularly those that pertain to the future horrific sufferings of the Messiah, like: **"I have given My body to the strikers, and My cheeks to them that plucked them: I have not turned away My face from them that rebuked Me, and spit upon Me. (Is. 50:6)"** "...there is no beauty in Him, nor comeliness: and we have seen Him, and there was no sightliness, ...Despised, and the most abject of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with infirmity: and His look was as it were hidden and despised, whereupon we esteemed Him not. ...and we have thought Him as it were a leper, and as one struck by God and afflicted." (Is. 53:2-5) **"For many dogs have encompassed Me: the council of the malignant hath besieged Me. They have dug My hands and feet. They have numbered all My bones."** (Ps 21:17, 18) **"And they gave Me gall for My food, and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink."** (Ps 68:22)

With these agonizing thoughts in her heart, she knew her future path would be sorrowful indeed. In

addition to this new sword that pierced her heart, she had been burdened by the ostracism and ridicule by those who insulted her vow of virginity.<sup>2</sup> A virgin with a child? Since her pregnancy she had to put up with quizzical looks and whisperings about her physical changes. Who could understand what was privileged to by her Creator – to be the mother of His Son, the prophesied Messiah and that she would still remain a virgin? In this ceremonial presentation and her own purification, she had to bear the sacrifice of her reputation being sullied. Words like: 'If you're a virgin, how could you give birth, and still be a virgin thereafter? Purification returns your virginity?'

So her day of joy just turned to sorrow. This is another reminder to her of God's providential work – the contrast of things throughout the universe. With joy, sorrow is always its accompanying counterbalance; so are the mutual contrasts of happiness and sadness, wealth and poverty, ease and difficulty, beauty and ugliness, suffering and comfort, good and evil, life and death, reward and punishment, Heaven and Hell; each of which accomplishes His will. **"All things are double, one against another, and He hath made nothing defective".(Ecc'cus 42:25).**

Henceforth, for the next 33 years, our Blessed Virgin Mother would carry this sword in her heart – the dreadful anticipation of the future brutality, atrocities and savagery that Jesus would undergo in His forthcoming Passion. Whenever she passes by some flock of sheep, she feels a sort of kinship with the shepherds lovingly raising, caring and nurturing a prized, spotless lamb for the holocaust of the Passover. Surely, she has become the caretaker of the only Sacrificial Lamb, the Holocaust that matters most in God's salvific plan. What a great and grave responsibility! So for the next thirty three years, Mary, the second Eve and second mother of all mankind, would seem to carry the burden of expiating the sin of Eve, the first mother who brought sin and death into this world, by carrying this sword in her heart till the Resurrection of her beloved Son.

Thank you, Momma Mary, for carrying this sword for 33 years in thy loving heart for our salvation. Hail Mary... Our Mother of the Sorrowful Heart, Pray for us now at the hour of our death. Amen.

## 2. THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT. (Matthew 2:13-14)

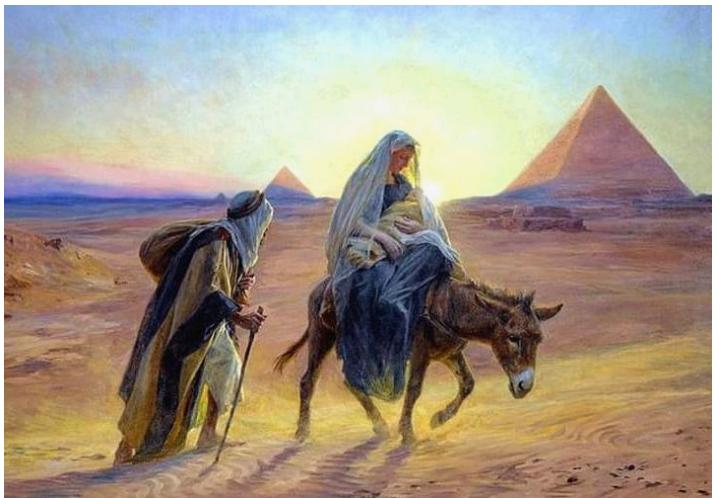
The angel came suddenly in the middle of the night to inform St. Joseph that the Child Jesus has to be saved for Herod's men were out to slay Him. It might have been a moonless night; it has to be cold – how do the Holy Family prepare for this? There is no preparation, like any family fleeing from savage killers, they grab what they can and left hurriedly. No food or enough clothing or necessary provisions for a long journey. The darkness, the cold, the foreboding desert, the long journey through the unknown, all these add up to the difficulty and misery of escaping into Egypt. Memories of that cold, lonely night searching for a home and being driven away in Bethlehem before the birth of Jesus, swiftly came to her. This night seems colder than that night though. The thought that the Infant-God has to traverse the big

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<sup>2</sup> Avowed virgins during that era were properly and conspicuously attired. As such, they are like a sore thumb sticking out from a crowd. So the mockery, such as, "A virgin? With child? How could it be? What gall to profess virginity and dress like one!?", were constant. These comments hurt her so much.

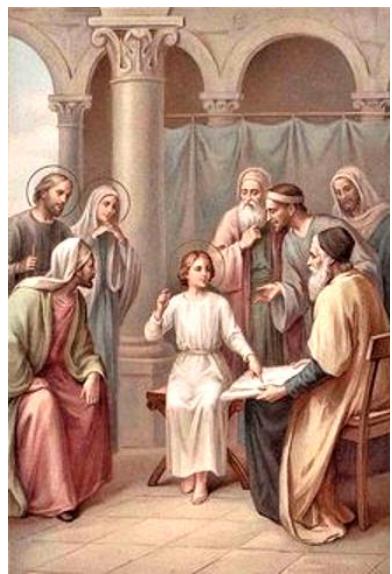
expanse of the desert towards Egypt gives her the shudders, but she told herself that she has to trust her God that this is His will, and His designs are always noble and righteous. By His mercy and grace, they will make it and save her beloved Son.

Another sword pierced our Blessed Virgin Mother's heart – the sword of fearfully escaping one's murderous enemies without any provisions or sustenance under the most extreme situation and environment. How could one bear this tribulation at age 16? While other young girls of the same age are just starting to enjoy their ripening into womanhood, here was the chaste young virgin with Child, trying to save her beloved Son's life through the cold, desolate and unforgiving desert. Momma Mary herein shows the docility and extreme patience needed to obey God's will. Then settling in various regions of Egypt, she and her Son, the King of kings and of all nations are now aliens in the land of the pharaohs, subject to discrimination, ostracism, unfair labor practices and inhumane treatment.



Thank you, Momma Mary, for accepting this sword, filled with frightful apprehensions, uncertainties and difficulties through thy heart for our salvation. **Hail Mary... Our Mother...**

### 3. THE LOSS OF THE CHILD JESUS IN THE TEMPLE. (Luke 2:43-45)

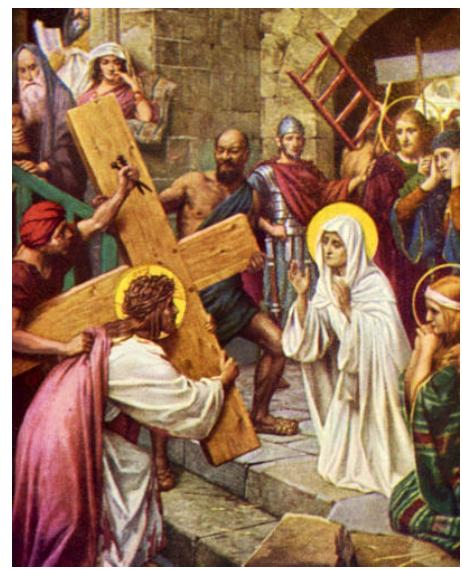


Exhilarated by the festivities that just finished in the temple, the Holy Family joined the caravan returning home to Nazareth. Momma Mary thought Jesus was with St. Joseph; he thought the other way too! Three days on the way home, they saw each other and realized that Jesus was with neither one of them, so they immediately searched for Him. Jesus, her Beloved Son, her God is gone! While searching for Jesus and making inquiries among other travelers, not too many would stop and listen to her while she searches for her Son. Mankind has always been this way from the fall of the first parents – people are more concerned with their own affairs and concerns, than the affairs of others, especially of God. Another sword stuck into her heart – the sword of nervous anxiety in the loss of a child, especially, the Child-God. Knowing Jesus is God, and is All-Wise, consoles her but the loss of a missing loved one would be hard to bear. Is there a loving and caring mother out there who could not empathize with her for her Loss? Did she know that this would be repeated again in 21 years? Worried anxiety and unsettling sense of loss was like a sword knifing through her heart.

Thank you, Momma Mary, for accepting this sword through thy heart for our salvation.  
**Hail Mary...Our Mother...**

#### 4. THE MEETING OF JESUS AND MARY ON THE WAY TO CALVARY.

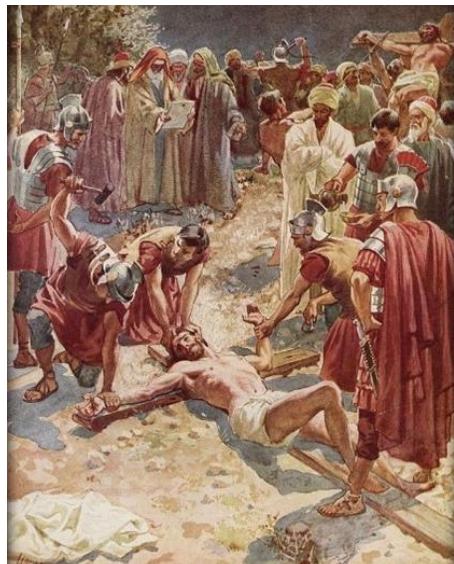
It has been almost 10 hours since they took her Son from the Garden of Olives; now she would see Him when He passes by on the way to Calvary. But wait, that Figure leading the parade of prisoners bearing crosses, Who is He? "Is this my Son, the Child I loved?" – she thinks to herself. "My Son, my Son, what have they done to Thee?!" she shouts within her heart. His face was swollenly unrecognizable; randomly scattered lumps, bruises and cuts covered His face. Both His jaws were broken; His lumpy face was pasted with blood, dust and spittle. A leper's face looks more acceptable than His! His blood-soaked clothes was a jumbled mosaic of fresh and dry blood, soil, dried mud, wood splinters from the cross and more spittle. The deafening crescendo of shouts and expletives, blows, kicks, spits and stones, directed toward her Son, was too much to hear, watch and bear. She had to fight hard to avoid fainting at the brutality of the scene she was witnessing.



The words of Scripture pales to the reality of the atrocities she was witnessing in front of her. "O humanity, how could you subject your God to such derision?!" she cries to herself. This sword is more painful than the earlier ones. But our Mother could not prepare herself for the next ones to come. For now, this sword almost took her life away.

Thank you, Momma Mary, for accepting this sword of the agonizing reality of the full extent of the Passion of Jesus through thy heart for our salvation. Hail Mary...Our Mother...

#### 5. THE CRUCIFIXION (AND DEATH OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ON THE CROSS).



When they reached Calvary, the brutal executioners violently tore off Jesus' clothes, which was glued to His wounds by the dried blood, and refreshed His wounds from the scourging again. Blood oozed out from His body like liquid from a wine press. The witnesses were so surprised at His meekness. Surely, an ordinary human would have yelled in pain at this painful disrobing. Nary was a whimper heard from Him. Our Blessed Mother could hardly contain herself at this new atrocity inflicted on her Son. Then they laid down the Cross on the ground. "How come there were no ropes to tie Him up on the cross He is carrying?" she thinks to herself. They have large newly machined spikes. Maybe the spikes are for holding the cross to the ground. But wait! They are going to impale Him on His cross with those spikes!

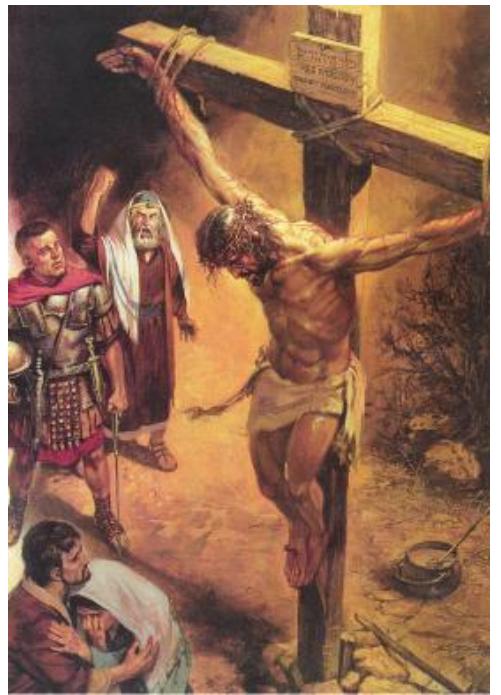
They are impaling His hands and feet to the Cross!

Each blow of the mallet on each spike felt like her heart was being pierced and pounded! The sound of the spikes penetrating the wood of the cross through the crunching sound of fracturing bones was so hard to bear! Blood squirted from His hands and feet like wine from a punctured full wineskin! How could our Blessed Mother bear up to this! Thirty-three years ago she was reminded by Simeon, the high priest, of her future sufferings. Was that a long enough time to prepare for this? She knows that no time is enough to prepare for such an atrocious injury inflicted to her heart, especially to her Son.

Then they raised up the cross and stood it up on a pre-dug hole. Looking up she saw her Son shaking, twitching and trembling like a fading lamb in the last throes of life. The Divine Paschal Lamb of God looks worse than all the holocausts offered in the temple during her stay there. Having observed her Divine Son's suffering and Passion, she became conscious of the incomplete, noncompensatory worth of all the expiatory holocausts sacrificed in the temple through the centuries to offer reparation to our offended Creator. The Divine salvific plan would take only the holocaust of her beloved Son, The Man-God, to tear down the solid, almost impenetrable wall that Adam's sin has placed between God and man, Heaven and Earth; and open up the gate of God's kingdom to mankind once again. When He breathed His last breath and gave up His soul, she felt like her soul went with Him from this earth. Her exemplary faith and hope in God's mercy and love for Him, carries her through on this most horrible hour.

Thank you, dearest Mother, for accepting this sword that stabbed thy heart as many times as the nails were hammered through Jesus' hands and feet during His crucifixion, for our salvation.

Hail Mary... Our Mother...



## 6. THE TAKING DOWN OF THE BODY OF JESUS FROM THE CROSS.

They did not break His legs because He is already dead. But what is that centurion doing with that spear? No! He is thrusting it into His side. What horrible, brutal savagery and lack of respect for the dead! Blood and water gushed forth from His opened side! The Divine blood, the Eucharistic drink and refreshment of souls spills earthward! For the first time and maybe the only time, the Divine water of life, coming from God Himself, which was promised by God through the prophets to purify mankind of its sins, gushes forth physically and in view of the witnesses of the Crucifixion! The centurion was drenched with this emulsion of Divine Unction from head to toe. The Divine Unction only Christ could give immediately shows its miraculous, curative and conversion powers. Half-blind since birth, the centurion shouted, "I can see!" He immediately knelt and acknowledged Jesus' Divinity and begs for forgiveness for his atrocious act before the dead body of Jesus. He was immediately converted (later in



his life, Longinus, the centurion would die a martyr's death for the Man-God he pierced!)

The Blessed Virgin Mary, our grieving mother, saw the miracle of the centurion's conversion and future martyrdom. And the perfect masterpiece of God's creation – the pure Virgin Mother of God, was drenched too! She received this blood and water not because she needed it for herself but her to dispose of for our salvation, literally and figuratively. With the help of the other disciples around the Cross, they collected all of the Divine Unction in flasks and wiped off the remainder with linen. This reminded her of her clean-up work in the temple after each holocaust offering. Tears flowed freely from her reddened eyes, trying to look up to her Son, The Lamb of God. Then while they were removing the nails from Jesus' hands, His body slipped downward towards her. She with the help of the other disciples caught Him in her arms and laid His dead, mutilated body on her lap. Her human nature briefly surfaced and almost decrying the 33 years of sorrowful burden she had carried, climaxed by this almost unbearable Passion she went through with her Son, she cried to herself, "If I had only known!?" But catching herself and remembering that she agreed to be the mother of the Paschal Lamb of God together with the sorrows and suffering that go with this responsibility, she immediately whispered, "But Thy will be done, my Lord and my God! Thy will be done!" Thus, together with her Son's fiat statement in Gethsemane, she affirmed that the will of God is paramount over all things; and complete obedience to His will is tantamount to salvation. Then she slumped almost unconscious over her dead Son's body.

Such docile obedience is what pleases our Eternal Father. Let's follow Jesus and Mary in this prime example of child-like obedience that we may gain God's love and mercy.

Thank you, Momma Mary, for accepting this sword of inconsolable grief that rent thy heart for our salvation. Hail Mary... Our Mother...

## 7. THE BURIAL OF JESUS.

After lovingly cleaning Jesus' dead body, they wrapped Him with new linen together with a hundred pounds of herbs and aloes. They laid Him in the new tomb and closed the opening with a big rock. She knows through the scriptures and by Jesus telling her, that He would rise from the dead on the third day. But how could she wait for another three days after seeing all the brutality and savagery He had to absorb to complete His mission. She reminded herself of that day in Jerusalem 21 years ago when she lost Him for three days. But this three-day wait is different. She could not wait to see Him alive and well again. Oh what anxious anticipation and desolation our Mother has to bear. Again, her obedient docility keeps her going and allows her to patiently wait for her Son to appear to her in His resurrected glory. This we should also emulate, for God is generous and loving of those who wait on Him.

Thank you, Momma Mary, for accepting this sword of anxious desolation and gloomy loneliness through thy heart for our salvation. Hail Mary...Our Mother...

O MOTHER of The SORROWFUL HEART, your mission is now complete; the reality of Simeon's prophecy has fully materialized in the sword-pierced rendering of your heart. O what great suffering you had to bear! O what great sorrow you have bottled within your sword-laced heart! Surely the plenitude of graces and virtues endowed on you by the Blessed Trinity was well-deserved and you did certainly earn them. O what privilege we are to be your children, beneficiaries of your co-redemptive work with Jesus. O sorrow, our Mother's lifetime companion, you are now conquered by our Blessed Mother's love for us! And with Jesus, she has gained for us, the joy of the re-opening of the kingdom of Heaven. Thank you so much Momma Mary for all that you have done for us! Obtain for us your children, reliant on thy unceasing protection and intercession, the graces necessary for us to obey God's will in all things, always and everywhere that we are able to please Him as you did. Thank You, Jesus, our Saviour and Redeemer, thank You Abba, our Eternal Father and thank You, the Holy Ghost, our mother's Spouse, for giving us so great a mother who gave and would give her all to help save us, Thy children. Amen.



### GRACES OBTAINED FROM DEVOTION TO THE SEVEN DOLORS OF OUR BLESSED MOTHER MARY



St. Alphonsus Liguori, in his book, *The Glories of Mary*, mentioned a revelation in which St. John the Evangelist saw both Our Lord and His Blessed Mother after her assumption into Heaven. He heard Mary ask Jesus for some special grace to all those who are devoted to her dolours (sorrows). Christ promised the four following special graces:

1. That those who before death invoked the divine Mother in the name of her sorrows should obtain true repentance of all their sins.
2. That He would protect all who have this devotion in their tribulations, and that He would protect them especially at the hour of their death.
3. That He would impress upon their minds the remembrance of His Passion, and that they should have their reward for it in heaven.

4. That He would commit such devout clients to the hands of Mary, with the power to disposed of them in whatever manner she might please, and to obtain for them all the graces she might desire.

For her part, Our Blessed Mother revealed to St. Bridget of Sweden that she grants the following **seven graces** to the souls who honor her daily by saying seven Hail Mary's while meditating on her tears and dolours (sorrows):

1. I will grant peace to their families.
2. They will be enlightened about the Divine mysteries.
3. I will console them in their pains, and I will accompany them in their work.
4. I will give them as much as they ask for as long as it does not oppose the adorable will of my Divine Son or the sanctification of their souls.
5. I will defend them in their spiritual battles with the infernal enemy and I will protect them at every instant of their lives.
6. I will visibly help them at the moment of their death, they will see the face of their Mother.
7. I have obtained this Grace from my Divine Son – that those who propagate this devotion to my tears and dolours, will be taken directly from this earthly life to eternal happiness since all their sins will be forgiven by my Son and I will be their eternal consolation and joy.



#### BENEFITS OF THE DEVOTION TO THE MOTHER OF SORROWS

1. To realize that the value of a soul is worth the supreme Sacrifice of Calvary.
2. To work for souls by evangelization, duty to life's duties, and prayer for sinners.
3. To pray always, in a life of union with God for whosoever has a heart similar to Jesus' and Mary's hearts will work for the salvation of souls.

September 15, Feast of The Mother of Sorrows

