

# OUR LADY OF SORROWS

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Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As the liturgical calendar draws us once again to the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows on September 15, I invite you to pause amid the busyness of daily life and enter deeply into this sacred mystery. At the heart of this journey stands Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows, the Mother who teaches us how to embrace the Cross not as defeat, but as the gateway to new life.

The Church has long venerated the Seven Sorrows of Mary, each one a station on her own Way of the Cross, mirroring the suffering of her Son. First, recall the Prophecy of Simeon in the Temple: "And a sword will pierce your own soul too" (Luke 2:35). Here, even in the joy of presenting the infant Jesus, Mary is forewarned of the pain to come. It pierces our illusions, our self-sufficiency, revealing the idols we cling to - our careers, our comforts, our unhealed wounds. We learn that this piercing is mercy; it is the Lord preparing us for the battle against sin, just as He prepared Mary.

Then comes the Flight into Egypt (Matthew 2:13-15), a hurried escape from Herod's murderous rage. Mary and Joseph, refugees in a foreign land, embody the exile we all experience in our fallen state. Mary's sorrow here reminds us that God calls us out of Egypt, out of slavery, into the promised land of His covenant. Let us listen anew to the Scriptures: "Out of Egypt I called my son" (Hosea 11:1). This is our story too - the Lord calling us from the darkness of our past into the light of communion.

The third sorrow, the Loss of the Child Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2:43-45), speaks to the anguish of separation. For three days, Mary searches with a heart full of sorrow, only to find Him in His Father's house. How many times have we "lost" Jesus in the midst of our busyness, our doubts, or our sins? This sorrow invites us to conversion: to leave behind our childish ways and embrace the will of the Father, as Jesus did. "Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" (Luke 2:49). Let this feast challenge us to scrutinize where we have wandered from the path.

Moving forward, we encounter Mary on the Way to Calvary, meeting her Son under the weight of the Cross. Mary's presence here teaches us accompaniment: not to run from suffering, but to walk alongside it, as she did. St. John Paul II often spoke of Mary as the model of faith in trial. Let us ask ourselves: Are we accompanying our brothers and sisters, or do we flee like the disciples?

The Crucifixion itself (John 19:25-27) is the pinnacle of sorrow, where Mary stands at the foot of the Cross, witnessing the agony of her Son. "Woman, behold your son... Behold your mother." In this moment, Jesus entrusts us to her, making her the Mother of the Church. Mary's sorrow completes what is lacking in Christ's afflictions (Colossians 1:24), inviting us to unite our pains - our rejections, our failures - to His redemptive suffering. We learn that the Cross is not optional; it is the sign of our baptism, the way to glory.

Following the Crucifixion, the Taking Down from the Cross - Mary holding the lifeless body of Jesus. This sorrow echoes the lamentations of the prophets, the grief of a world broken by sin. Yet, we see resurrection budding even here. Think of the parents who have lost children, the spouses who have endured betrayal; they find hope in Mary's embrace. She who held the dead Christ now holds us, whispering that death does not have the final word.

Finally, the Burial of Jesus (John 19:38-42), sealing the tomb and seemingly the end of all hope. Mary's faith shines brightest in this darkness, trusting in the promise of resurrection. This is the faith we are called to - a faith that waits in the tomb of our own deaths: death to pride, to division, to unbelief.

Peace,

