

Via Matris

The First Sorrow: The Prophecy of Simeon (Luke 2)

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, and casting yourself at the feet of the Mother of Dolors, say with sorrow:

Virgin beloved, who did feel so bitter pangs of soul at seeing the abuse which I, wretch that I am, would make of the Blood of your dear Son, obtain for me, I pray you, by your riven heart, that in time to come, I may better correspond to God's mercies, profit by his heavenly grace, receive not in vain his lights and inspirations, and so be among the blessed number of those who are saved by the bitter passion of Jesus. Amen.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death.

Virgin Most Sorrowful, pray for us.

Second Sorrow: The Flight into Egypt (Matthew 2)

Consider the sharp sorrow which Mary felt when, Saint 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! What sufferings she bore in that land of exile, what sorrow amid that people given to idolatry! But consider how often you have renewed that bitter grief of Mary, when your sins have caused her Son to flee from your heart.

Wherefore repent, and turn to her, humbly saying:

Sweetest Mother, once and once only Herod obliged you to flee with your Jesus, to escape the slaughter which he had commanded; but I, how often have I forced my Redeemer, and you with him, to flee from my heart, when I have admitted into it accursed sin, hateful to you and to my loving Lord. With tears and contrition I humbly beg for pardon. Mercy, dear Lady, mercy! And I promise you that, for the future, with the help of God, I will ever maintain my Savior and you in complete possession of my soul. Amen.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death.

Virgin Most Sorrowful, pray for us.

Third Sorrow: The Loss of Jesus (Luke 2)

How dreadful 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 kinfolk and acquaintances, 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 do make of very little or of no account the precious treasure of divine love.

Weep then for your blindness, and turning yourself to that Lady of sighs, your Mother, say with compunction: Virgin most afflicted, obtain that I may learn from you to seek Jesus when I have lost him by giving ear to my passions and to the evil suggestions of the devil; obtain that I may find him again, and when I possess him once more, that I may ever repeat the words of the Spouse, "I found Him whom my soul loveth; I held Him, and I will not let him go." Amen.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death.

Virgin Most Sorrowful, pray for us.

Fourth Sorrow: Mary meets Jesus on the Road to Calvary (Luke 23:27; John 19:25)

Come, O you sinners, come and see if you can endure so sad a sight. This Mother, so tender and loving, meets her beloved Son, meets him amidst an impious rabble, who drag him to a cruel death, wounded, torn by stripes, crowned by 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, 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.

Virgin most holy, I crave pardon for the sorrows I have caused you. I know and confess that I deserve it not, for it is I through whom your Jesus was so treated; yet do you call to mind that you are the Mother of mercy. Show mercy then to me, and I promise to be more faithful to my Redeemer in the time to come, and thus to console you for the many sorrows I have offered to your afflicted heart. Amen.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death.

Virgin Most Sorrowful, pray for us.

Fifth Sorrow: Mary Sees Jesus Die on the Cross (Matthew 27; Mark 15; Luke 23; John 19)

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 in 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 joined itself to that of Jesus.

Mother of Sorrows, who would not leave Calvary until you had drunk the last drop of the chalice of your woe, how great is my confusion of face, that I so often refuse to take up my cross, and in all ways endeavor to avoid those slight sufferings which the Lord, for my good, is pleased to send upon me. Obtain for me, I pray you, that I may see clearly the value of suffering, and may be enabled, if not to cry with St. Francis Xavier, "More to suffer, my God! Ah, more!" At least to bear meekly all my crosses and trials. Amen.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death.

Virgin Most Sorrowful, pray for us.

Sixth Sorrow: Mary Receives Jesus's Body into Her Arms (Matthew 27; Mark 15; Luke 23; John 19)

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 your Beloved to you. Who would not pity you? 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, and Nicodemus, who can scarcely bear his sorrow.

Shall I alone be tearless amid such grief? Ingrate and hard am I! Grant, dear Mother, that my heart may be pierced with the same sword that pierced your sorrowful soul, that it may be softened, and may indeed lament those my heavy sins which were the cause of your cruel suffering. Amen.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death.

Virgin Most Sorrowful, pray for us.

Seventh Sorrow: Mary Places Jesus's Body in the Tomb (Matthew 27; Mark 15; Luke 23; John 19)

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 scarcely 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!

Mother most desolate, who did indeed in body depart from the sepulcher, but did leave your heart where was your only treasure, obtain that all our desires, all our love may rest there with you. Surely our hearts must melt with love to our Savior, who has shed his Blood for our salvation. Surely we must love you, who has suffered so much for us. Oh, by all your sorrows, grant that the memory of them may be ever imprinted on our mind, that our hearts may burn with love to God, and to you, sweet Mother, who did pour out all your soul in sorrow for the Passion of Jesus: to him be honor, glory, and thanksgiving for ever and ever. Amen.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death.

Virgin Most Sorrowful, pray for us.

Now recite three Hail Mary's in honor of Our Blessed Lady's tears.