

# The Devotion of the Seven Sorrows of the Blessed Virgin Mary



“God wills to establish in the world devotion to My Immaculate Heart.”

## **Why Devotion to the Heart of Our Mother in Her Sorrows?**

*Because Jesus wants this devotion.*

“Jesus Christ Himself revealed to Blessed Veronica of Binasco, that, He is more pleased in seeing His Mother compassionated than Himself.” He said to her: ‘*My daughter, tears shed for My Passion are dear to Me; but as I loved My Mother Mary with an immense love, the meditation on the torments which She endured at My death is even more agreeable to Me.*’

“Wherefore the graces promised by Jesus to those who are devoted to the dolours of Mary are very great.”<sup>1</sup>

*Because Our Lady also wants it!*

Our Lady lamented to St. Bridget that very few consoled Her by meditating on Her Sorrows, and “that the greater part of the world lived in forgetfulness of them: ‘*I look around at all who are on earth, to see if by chance there are any who pity Me, and meditate upon My Sorrows; and I find that there are very few. Therefore, My daughter, though I am forgotten by many, at least do you not forget Me; consider My anguish, and imitate, as far as you can, My grief.*’”<sup>2</sup>

“For this purpose the Blessed Virgin Herself appeared in the year 1239 to the founder of the Order of the Servites, or servants of Mary, to ask them to institute a religious order in remembrance of Her sorrows.”<sup>3</sup>

*It is a major Request of Heaven given at Fatima.*

At Fatima, in 1916, the Angel of Peace appeared to the three child seers Lucy, Francisco and Jacinta, and after encouraging them to pray and teaching them a prayer of adoration, said “...The Hearts of Jesus and Mary are attentive to the voice of your supplications.”<sup>4</sup>

At Fatima, on June 13, 1917, Our Lady, after informing the three child seers that Jacinta and Francisco will go to Heaven soon, but that Lucy is to stay on earth some time longer — She said to Lucy, “Jesus wishes to make use of you in order to make Me known and loved”; Our Lady then said: “He wants to establish in the world devotion to My Immaculate Heart..”<sup>5</sup>

At Fatima, on July 13, 1917, after the child seers were terrified by the vision of hell, Our Lady said to them, “You have seen hell, where the souls

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<sup>1</sup> *The Glories of Mary*, by St. Alphonsus de Liguori, p. 478.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 492.

<sup>4</sup> *The Whole Truth About Fatima*, Vol. I, p. 68.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 158-9.

of poor sinners go. To save them (poor sinners), **God wills to establish in the world devotion to My Immaculate Heart.** If what I say to you is done, many souls will be saved and there will be peace...<sup>6</sup>

Jesus Himself further explained His will to Sister Lucy. In response to her question asking Him why He would not convert Russia without the Pope doing the Consecration of Russia, Jesus said: “*Because I want My whole Church to recognize that Consecration as a Triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, so that later on My Church will place devotion to My Mother’s Immaculate Heart beside devotion to My Sacred Heart.*”<sup>7</sup>

### *Saints and Doctors of the Church Promote this Devotion*

St. Albert the Great said, “*that as we are under great obligations to Jesus for His Passion endured for our love, so also are we under great obligations to Mary for the martyrdom which She voluntarily suffered for our salvation in the death of Her Son.*” He said “voluntarily (suffered), since, as St. Agnes revealed to St. Bridget, ‘*our compassionate and benign Mother was satisfied rather to endure any torment than that our souls should not be redeemed.*”<sup>8</sup>

“The grief of Mary was so great that, were it divided amongst all men, it would suffice to cause their immediate death.”<sup>9</sup> ...St. Bernardine of Sienna

“*While other martyrs suffered by sacrificing their own lives, the Blessed Virgin suffered by sacrificing Her Son’s life – a life that She loved far more than Her own; so that She not only suffered in Her soul all that Her Son endured in His body, but moreover the sight of Her Son’s torments brought more grief to Her heart than if She had endured them all in Her own person.*”<sup>10</sup> ...St. Antoninus

“*The Passion of Jesus began with His birth.* So also did Mary, in all things like unto Her Son, endure Her martyrdom throughout Her life.”<sup>11</sup> ...St. Bernard

It was “revealed to St. Bridget” by an angel, “that the Blessed Virgin, even before She became His Mother, knowing how much the Incarnate Word was to suffer for the salvation of men, and compassionating this innocent Saviour, Who was to be so cruelly put to death for crimes not His own, even then began Her great martyrdom.”<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 182.

<sup>7</sup> This reply of Jesus to Sister Lucy is in her letter to Fr. Gonçalves, dated May 18, 1936. See *The Whole Truth About Fatima*, Vol. II, p. 631.

<sup>8</sup> *The Glories of Mary*, p. 477.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 469.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 465.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 466.

“The martyrs endured their torments in their bodies; Mary suffered Hers in Her soul.” ...St. Alphonsus de Liguori. “Now, as the soul is more noble than the body, so much greater were Mary’s sufferings than those of all the martyrs, as Jesus Christ Himself said to St. Catherine of Siena: ‘*Between the sufferings of the soul and those of the body there is no comparison.*’”<sup>13</sup>

“The Blessed Virgin Mary, for the love She bore us, was willing to see Her Son sacrificed to Divine Justice by the barbarity of men. This great torment, then, which Mary endured for us — a torment that was more than a thousand deaths — deserves both our compassion and our gratitude. If we can make no other return for so much love, at least let us give a few moments this day to consider the greatness of the sufferings by which Mary became the Queen of martyrs; for the sufferings of Her great martyrdom exceeded those of all the martyrs; being, in the first place, the longest in point of duration; and in the second place, the greatest in point of intensity.”<sup>14</sup> ...St. Alphonsus de Liguori.

“So great a love has our Heavenly Mother for us, that She deserves our gratitude, and that gratitude should be shown by at least meditating upon, and pitying Her in Her Sorrows.”<sup>15</sup> ...St. Alphonsus de Liguori.

### *In the words of the Church:*

Pope Benedict XIII, in 1724, promulgated and encouraged the practice of the devotion to Our Lady’s Sorrows when he bestowed many indulgences for the recitation of the Chaplet of the Seven Sorrows. (see page 10)

Our Lady’s Sorrows are commemorated twice a year on the liturgical calendar, September 15, and the Friday before Palm Sunday. Commemorating the Sorrows of the Blessed Virgin Mary twice a year on the Roman Liturgical Calendar demonstrates how important this devotion is to Heaven.

## **History of the Devotion**

Devotion to the Mother of Sorrows dates back to the beginning of the Church. The first example we have is St. John at the foot of the Cross. This devotion was ensured in Church history by the gospel narrative of St. John — “Now there stood by the Cross of Jesus, His Mother...” (Jn. 19:25).

Though the devotion has always been part of Catholic piety, it was not until the 13th Century that the devotion of meditating on the sorrows of Our Lady began to flourish much more. In Florence, Italy seven holy men of noble birth left the city seeking solitude on Mount Senario and together

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<sup>13</sup> *The Glories of Mary*, p. 469.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 464.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 478.

formed a community dedicating their lives to prayer and penance. The seven holy men all had a strong devotion to Our Lady.

On Good Friday in 1239, while meditating on Our Lord's Passion and Our Lady's sufferings, Our Lady appeared to the 7 holy men and revealed to them Her wish for them to form an Order dedicated to practicing and promoting the devotion to Her Sorrows. These men became the founders of the religious Order of the Servants of Mary (or Servites) and are all canonized saints today.

At Our Lady's request, the seven founders made the object of their Order meditation on the pains suffered by Our Lady in the Life, Passion and Death of Her Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, and undertook promoting this devotion of meditating on the Seven Sorrows of Our Lady to all Catholics, introducing the Chaplet (or Little Rosary) of the Seven Sorrows of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

### *The Seven Sorrows of Our Lady*

- 1. St. Simeon's Prophecy**
- 2. The Flight into Egypt**
- 3. The Loss of Jesus in the Temple**
- 4. The Meeting of Mary and Jesus on the Way to Calvary**
- 5. The Crucifixion and Death of Jesus**
- 6. The Piercing of the Side of Jesus, and His Descent from the Cross**
- 7. The Burial of Jesus.**

### *Graces and promises attached to the practice of the devotion in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary Sorrowing:*

According to St. Alphonsus de Liguori (*The Glories of Mary*) it was revealed to Saint Elizabeth that at the request of Our Lady, Our Lord promised four principal graces to those devoted to Her Sorrows:

1. That those who before death invoke the divine Mother in the name of Her Sorrows will obtain true repentance of all their sins;
2. That He will protect all who have this devotion in their tribulations, and will protect them especially at the hour of death;
3. That He will impress on their minds the remembrance of His Passion;
4. That He will place such devout servants in Mother Mary's hands to do with them as She wishes and to obtain for them all the graces She desires.

In addition to these four graces there are also seven promises attached to the practice of daily praying seven Hail Mary's while meditating on Our Lady's Tears and Sorrows. These seven promises were revealed to St. Bridget of Sweden:

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 sorrows will be taken directly from this earthly life to eternal happiness, since all their sins will be forgiven and My Son will be their eternal consolation and joy."

(*Prayers and Heavenly Promises* by Joan Carroll Cruz; Imprimatur: Most Rev. Francis B. Schulte, 1989, pg. 34-35)

### *Novena to Our Lady of Sorrows (from the Raccolta).*

May be said as a nine day novena and/or as a companion to the daily recitation of 7 Hail Marys offered in honor of Our Lady's Sorrows.

Each day begin with:

- V. O God, come to my assistance;
- R. O Lord, make haste to help me.
- V. Glory be, etc.
- R. As it was, etc.

Then:

**Day I.** I grieve for Thee, O Mary most sorrowful, in the affliction of Thy tender heart at the prophecy of the holy and aged Simeon. Dear Mother, by Thy heart so afflicted, obtain for me the virtue of humility and the Gift of the holy Fear of God. **Pray one Hail Mary.**

**Day II.** I grieve for Thee, O Mary most sorrowful, in the anguish of Thy most affectionate heart during the flight into Egypt and Thy sojourn there. Dear Mother, by Thy heart so troubled, obtain for me the virtue of generosity, especially towards the poor, and the Gift of Piety. **Pray one Hail Mary.**

**Day III.** I grieve for Thee, O Mary most sorrowful, in those anxieties which tried Thy troubled heart at the loss of Thy dear Jesus. Dear Mother, by Thy heart so full of anguish, obtain for me the virtue of chastity and the Gift of Knowledge. **Pray one Hail Mary.**

**Day IV.** I grieve for Thee, O Mary most sorrowful, in the consternation of Thy heart at meeting Jesus as He carried His Cross. Dear Mother, by Thy heart so troubled, obtain for me the virtue of patience and the Gift of Fortitude. **Pray one Hail Mary.**

**Day V.** I grieve for Thee, O Mary most sorrowful, in the martyrdom which Thy generous heart endured in standing near Jesus in His agony. Dear Mother, by Thy heart afflicted in such wise, obtain for me the virtue of temperance and the Gift of Counsel. **Pray one Hail Mary.**

**Day VI.** I grieve for Thee, O Mary most sorrowful, in the wounding of Thy compassionate heart, when the side of Jesus was struck by the lance and His Heart was pierced. Dear Mother, by Thy heart thus transfixed, obtain for me the virtue of fraternal charity and the Gift of Understanding. **Pray one Hail Mary.**

**Day VII.** I grieve for Thee, O Mary most sorrowful, for the pangs that wrenched Thy most loving heart at the burial of Jesus. Dear Mother, by Thy heart sunk in the bitterness of desolation, obtain for me the virtue of diligence and the Gift of Wisdom. **Pray one Hail Mary.**

**V.** Pray for us, O Virgin most sorrowful,

**R.** That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

### *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 mercy, by the Blessed Virgin Mary, Thy Mother, whose most holy soul was pierced by a sword of sorrow in the hour of Thy bitter Passion. We ask this through Thee, Jesus Christ, Saviour of the world, who with the Father and the Holy Ghost livest and reignest world without end. Amen.

An indulgence of 5 years. An indulgence of 7 years each day in September. A plenary indulgence once a month on the usual conditions, if these prayers are recited daily (Pius VII, Audience Jan. 14, 1815).

### *Invocations*

Holy Mother, pierce me through; In my heart each wound renew, Of my Saviour crucified. (Roman Missal).

An indulgence of 500 days. A plenary indulgence under the usual conditions, if prayed devoutly every day for a month (S.P. Ap., Aug. 1, 1934).

Mary most sorrowful, Mother of Christians, pray for us. An indulgence of 300 days. (Pius X, Audience, June 4, 1906)

Virgin most sorrowful, pray for us. *Virgo dolorosissima, ora pro nobis.*

An indulgence of 300 days. An indulgence of 5 years, if, in honor of the B.V.M. Sorrowing, the Hail Mary is devoutly recited 7 times followed by the above invocation once (S.P. Ap., Nov. 22, 1934).

### *Prayers to the Sorrowful Mother (from the Raccolta)*

Mary, most holy Virgin and Queen of Martyrs, accept the sincere homage of my filial affection. Into Thy heart, pierced by so many swords, do Thou welcome my poor soul. Receive it as the companion of Thy sorrows at the foot of the Cross, on which Jesus died for the redemption of the world. With Thee, O sorrowful Virgin, I will gladly suffer all the trials, contradictions, and infirmities which it shall please Our Lord to send me. I offer them all to Thee in memory of Thy sorrows, so that every thought of my mind, and every beat of my heart may be an act of compassion and of love for Thee. And do Thou, sweet Mother, have pity on me, reconcile me to Thy divine Son Jesus, keep me in His grace and assist me in my last agony, so that I may be able to meet Thee in Heaven and sing Thy glories. Amen.

An indulgence of 500 days — (S.C. Ind., Mar. 20, 1887).

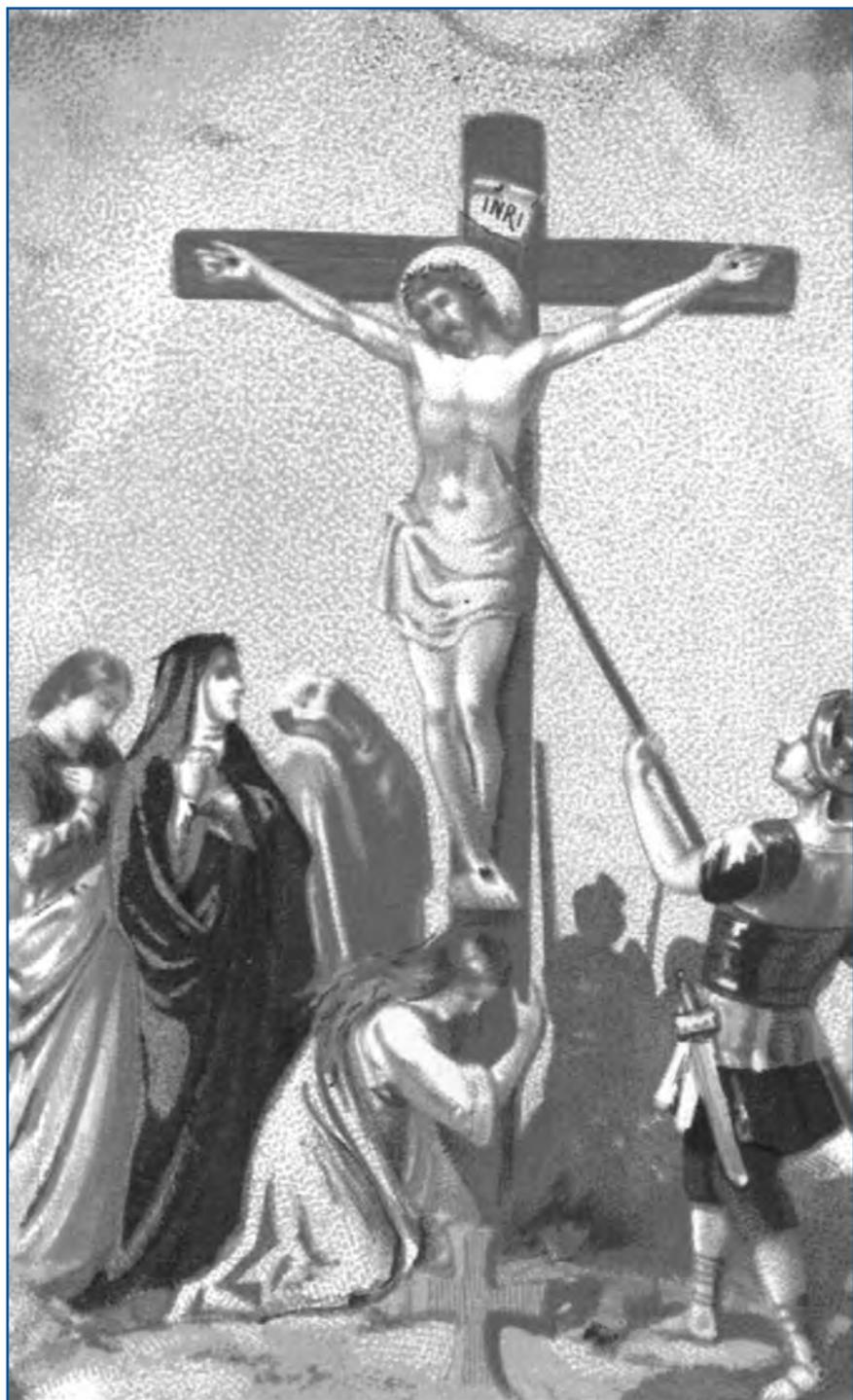
Most holy Virgin and Mother, whose soul was pierced by a sword of sorrow in the Passion of Thy divine Son, and Who in His glorious Resurrection wast filled with never-ending joy at His triumph; obtain for us who call upon Thee, so to be partakers in the adversities of Holy Church and the sorrows of the Sovereign Pontiff, as to be found worthy to rejoice with them in the consolations for which we pray, in the charity and peace of the same Christ our Lord. Amen

An indulgence of 500 days (Pius X, Rescript in his own hand, Jan. 25, 1906).

### *The Chaplet of the Seven Sorrows*

One of the devotions practiced and promoted by the seven founders of the Servants of Mary was The Chaplet of the Seven Sorrows. This chaplet consists of seven segments, one segment for each of the seven principal Sorrows or Dolors of the Blessed Virgin. Each segment of the chaplet consists of praying one Our Father and seven Hail Marys while meditating on the particular sorrow for that segment, and followed by a special verse to be said at the end of each segment. After the prayers of the seventh segment, or seventh sorrow of Our Lady, the Salve Regina (Hail, Holy Queen) and another prayer are prayed followed by three more Hail Marys at the very end in honor of the tears Our Lady shed in Her Sorrows.

*(See also the diagram on page 23 to help you pray this Chaplet.)*



## The Chaplet (Little Rosary) of the Seven Sorrows

The Chaplet may be prayed taking one sorrow per day for a week, or reciting the entire chaplet all at one time (or in one day). When the entire chaplet is recited all at one time, the Act of Contrition and the introductory prayers of “O God come to my assistance” etc. is said only at the beginning of the chaplet.

Included in the Chaplet below is a brief overview of each sorrow for meditation purpose while praying the Chaplet. These meditations are taken from extracts of *The Glories of Mary* by St. Alphonsus de Liguori.

**Make an Act of Contrition** (see page 24)

### MONDAY

**V.** O God, come to my assistance.

**R.** O Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory be ... (see page 21)



### *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 Marys ...** (see page 21)

**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 ... (see page 21)

### *The Second Sorrow of Mary*

#### **The Flight into Egypt**

“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.”

#### **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 Marys ...** (see page 21)

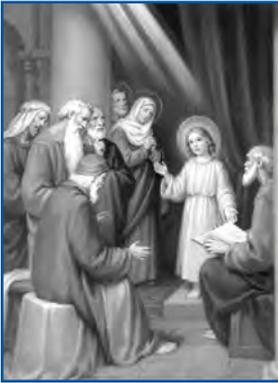
**Verse ...** (see page 11)

**WEDNESDAY**

**V.** O God, come to my assistance.

**R.** O Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory be ... (see page 21)



*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 Marys ... Verse...** (see page 11)

## THURSDAY

**V.** O God, come to my assistance.

**R.** O Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory be ... (see page 21)

### *The Fourth Sorrow of Mary*

### **The Meeting of Mary and 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 are 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 Pharisees (and their associates) 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 Marys ... Verse...** (see page 11)

### FRIDAY

**V.** O God, come to my assistance.

**R.** O Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory be ... (see page 21)

### *The Fifth Sorrow of Mary*

### **The Crucifixion and 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 Thee 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 Marys ... Verse ...** (see page 11)

### SATURDAY

**V.** O God, come to my assistance.

**R.** O Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory be ... (see page 21)



## *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 Marys ... Verse ...** *(see page 11)* **SUNDAY**

**V.** O God, come to my assistance.

**R.** O Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory be ... *(see page 21)*

### *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



**The Mother of Sorrows  
with St. John**

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 Him from Her arms, embalm Him with aromatic herbs, and wrap Him 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 Marys ... Verse ... (see page 11)**  
**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.

**Pray**

Three Hail Marys in honor of the tears shed by Our Lady in Her Sorrows.

**\*Hail, Holy Queen:**

Hail, Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy, Hail our life, our sweetness and our hope. To Thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve. To Thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears. Turn then, Most gracious Advocate, Thine eyes of mercy toward us, and after this our exile show unto us the blessed Fruit of Thy womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary. **V.** Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God. **R.** That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

While in captivity under Napoleon Bonaparte in 1809, Pope Pius VII wrote a litany to Our Lady of Sorrows. What follows is one translation of the original Latin.

## Litany of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows

Lord, have mercy on us.	Mother filled with anguish,*
Christ, have mercy on us.	Mother crucified in heart,*
Lord, have mercy on us.	Mother most sad,*
Christ, hear us.	Fountain of tears,*
Christ, graciously hear us.	Vial of suffering,*
God the Father of Heaven, <i>Have mercy on us.</i>	Mirror of patience,*
God the Son, Redeemer of the world, <i>Have mercy on us.</i>	Rock of constancy,*
God the Holy Ghost, <i>Have mercy on us.</i>	Anchor of confidence,*
Holy Trinity, One God <i>Have mercy on us.</i>	Refuge of the forsaken,*
	Shield of the oppressed,*
	Subduer of the unbelieving,*
	Comfort of the afflicted,*
	Medicine of the sick,*
Holy Mary,*	Strength of the weak,*
Holy Mother of God,*	Harbor of the wretched,*
Holy Virgin of virgins,*	Calmer of the tempests,*
Mother crucified,*	Resource of mourners,*
Sorrowful Mother,*	Terror of the treacherous,*
Tearful Mother,*	Treasure of the faithful,*
Afflicted Mother,*	Eye of the Prophets,*
Forsaken Mother,*	Staff of Apostles,*
Desolate Mother,*	Crown of Martyrs,*
Mother bereft of Thy Child,*	Light of Confessors,*
Mother transfixed with the sword,*	Pearl of Virgins,*
Mother overwhelmed with grief,*	Consolation of Widows,*
	Joy of all Saints,*

\*Pray for us

Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world, *Spare us, O Jesus!*

Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world, *Graciously hear us, O Jesus!*

Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world, *Have mercy on us, O Jesus!*

Look down upon us, deliver us, and save us from all trouble, in the power of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Imprint, O Lady! Thy wounds upon my heart, that I may read therein sorrow and love—sorrow to endure every sorrow for Thee; love to despise every love for Thine. Amen.

**The Stabat Mater Dolorosa** is considered one of the seven greatest Latin hymns of all time. It is a Thirteenth Century Roman Catholic Sequence (a hymn sung after the Gradual in certain Masses) often attributed to Pope Innocent III and Jacopone da Todi. The title, Stabat Mater Dolorosa comes from the first line of the sequence and means literally, “The sorrowful Mother was standing”.

From *The Way of The Cross* according to the method of St. Alphonsus Liguori.

Stabat Mater dolorosa Juxta crucem lacrymosa, Dum pendebat Filius.	At the Cross Her station keeping, Stood the mournful Mother weeping, Close to Jesus to the last.
Cujus animam gementem, Contristatam et dolentem, Pertransiuit gladius.	Through Her heart, His sorrow sharing, All His bitter anguish bearing, Now at length the sword has passed.
O quam tristis et afflicta Fuit illa benedicta Mater Unigeniti!	Oh, how sad and sore distressed Was that Mother highly blessed Of the sole-begotten One!
Quæ mærebat et dolébat, Pia Mater dum vidébat Nati poenas ínclýti.	Christ above in torment hangs, She beneath beholds the pangs Of Her dying, glorious Son.
Quis est homo, qui non fleret, Matrem Christi si vidéret In tanto supplicio?	Is there one who would not weep Whelmed in miseries so deep Christ's dear Mother to behold?
Quis non posset contristári, Christi Matrem contemplári Dolentem cum Fílio?	Can the human heart refrain From partaking in Her pain, In that Mother's pain untold?
Pro peccátis suae gentis Vidit Jesum in torméntis, Et flagéllis súbditum.	Bruised, derided, cursed, defiled, She beheld Her tender Child, All with bloody scourges rent,
Vidit suum dulcem natum Moriéndo desolátum, Dum emísit spíritum.	For the sins of His own nation Saw Him hang in desolation Till His spirit forth He sent.
Eia Mater, fons amóris, Me sentíre vim dolóris Fac ut técum lúgeam.	O Thou Mother! fount of love, Touch my spirit from above. Make my heart with Thine accord:
Fac, ut ardeat cor meum, In amándo Christum Deum, Ut sibi compláceam.	Make me feel as Thou hast felt; Make my soul to glow and melt With the love of Christ, my God.

The hymn is often associated with the Stations of the Cross. It is recited as the Sequence in the two Masses on the Roman Calendar commemorating Our Lady of Sorrows: The Feast of the Seven Dolors of the Blessed Virgin Mary which is the Mass of September 15 and the Mass on the Friday in Passion Week.

Sancta Mater, istud agas Crucifigi fige plagas Cordi meo válide.	Holy Mother, pierce me through! In my heart each wound renew Of my Savior crucified.
Tui nati vulneráti, Tam dignáti pro me pati, Pœnas mecum dívide.	Let me share with Thee His pain, Who for all my sins was slain. Who for me in torments died.
Fac me tecum píe flere, Crucifixo condolóre, Donec ego víxero.	Let me mingle tears with Thee, Mourning Him Who mourned for me, All the days that I may live.
Juxta Crucem tecum stare Et me tibi sociáre In planctu desídero.	By the Cross with Thee to stay, There with Thee to weep and pray, Is all I ask of Thee to give.
Virgo vírginum præclára, Mihi jam non sis amára: Fac me tecum plángere.	Virgin of all virgins best! Listen to my fond request: Let me share Thy grief divine;
Fac, ut portem Christi mortem, Passiónis fac consórtem, Et plagas recólere.	Let me, to my latest breath, In my body bear the death Of that dying Son of Thine.
Fac me plagis vulnerári, Fac me Cruce inebriári, Et crúore Fílii.	Wounded with His every wound, Steep my soul till it hath swooned In His very Blood away.
Flammis ne urar succénsus, Per te, Virgo, sim defénsus In die judicii.	Be to me, O Virgin, nigh, Lest in flames I burn and die, In His awful Judgment Day.
Christe, cum sit hinc exire, Da per Matrem me veníre Ad palmam victóriae.	Christ, when Thou shalt call me hence, Be Thy Mother my defense, Be Thy Cross my victory.
Quando corpus moriétur, Fac, ut animæ donétur Paradísi glória. Amen.	While my body here decays, May my soul Thy goodness praise, Safe in paradise with Thee. Amen.

## Prayers of the Mass of Our Lady of Sorrows

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the most powerful form of prayer and the best way to pay homage to Our Lady and Her Sorrows, and through Her, pay homage to Our Lord. Our Lady of Sorrows is commemorated twice on the Liturgical Calendar: The Friday of Passion week (the Friday before Palm Sunday) and September 15.

**Introit:** There stood by the cross of Jesus, His Mother, and His Mother's sister, Mary of Cleophas, and Salome, and Mary Magdalen. **V.** Woman, behold Thy son, said Jesus; to the disciple He said, Behold thy Mother. (John 19:25 ) **V.** Glory...

**Prayer (Collect): for Friday of Passion Week:** O God, in Whose Passion the sword, according to the prophecy of blessed Simeon, pierced through the soul of Mary, the glorious Virgin and Mother, mercifully grant that we, who reverently commemorate Her piercing through and Her suffering, may, by the interceding glorious merits of all the saints faithfully standing by the cross, obtain the happy fruit of Thy Passion. Who livest and reignest, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God, world without end. **R.** Amen.

**Prayer for Feast on September 15:** O God, in Whose Passion a sword of sorrow pierced the most dear soul of the glorious Virgin-Mother, Mary, as foretold by Simeon, mercifully grant that we who reverently commemorate Her sorrows, may obtain the blessed effect of Thy Passion. Who livest and reignest, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God, world without end. **R.** Amen.

**Lesson:** (Judith 13:22-25) The Lord hath blessed thee by His power, because by thee He hath brought our enemies to nought. Blessed art thou, O daughter, by the Lord the most high God, above all women upon the earth. Blessed be the Lord Who made Heaven and earth, because He hath so magnified thy name this day, that thy praise shall not depart out of the mouths of men, who shall be mindful of the power of the Lord forever; for that thou hast not spared thy life by reason of the distress and tribulation of thy people, but hast prevented our ruin in the presence of our God.

**Gradual:** Sorrowful and tearful art Thou, O Virgin Mary, standing by the cross of the Lord Jesus, Thy Son and Redeemer. **V.** O Virgin Mother of God, He Whom the whole earth containeth not, the Author of life, made Man, beareth this anguish of the cross.

**Tract:** Holy Mary, Queen of Heaven and Mistress of the world, filled with sorrow, stood by the cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ. (Lam. 1:12) **V.** O all you that pass by the way, attend and see if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow.

**Sequence:** Stabat Mater - see page 18.

**Gospel:** (John 19:25-27) At that time, there stood by the Cross of Jesus, His

Mother, and His mother's sister, Mary of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalen. When Jesus therefore had seen 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. And from that hour the disciple took Her into his care.

**Offertory:** Remember, O Virgin Mother of God, when Thou standest in the presence of the Lord, that Thou speak good things for us and turn His wrath from us.

**Secret for Friday of Passion Week and Mass of September 15:** We offer Thee prayers and sacrifices, O Lord Jesus Christ, humbly entreating that we, who commemorate in our prayers the piercing of the most dear soul of Blessed Mary, Thy Mother, may, through the multiplied intercession of Her and of Her holy companions under the Cross, by the merits of Thy death, receive our portion with the blessed. Who livest and reignest in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God, world without end. *R.* Amen.

**Communion:** Blessed are the senses of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which without death earned the palm of martyrdom beneath the Cross of Our Lord.

**Postcommunion for Friday of Passion Week and Mass of September 15:** May the protection of the sacrifice which we have received never leave us, and may it ever ward off from us all things harmful. We ask this through Our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God, world without end. *R.* Amen.

### **The Our Father**

Our Father, Who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy Kingdom come; Thy Will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

### **The Hail Mary**

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. Amen.

### **The Glory Be**

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

### *There are Great Spiritual Benefits for this Devotion*

The graces and promises given to those who practice the devotion to Our Lady and Her Sorrows are very great. But should you need a little encouragement in embracing this devotion, perhaps the following account from the revelations of St. Bridget will help:

“There was a certain rich man, as noble by birth as he was vile and sinful in his habits. He had given himself by an express compact, as a slave to the devil; and for sixty successive years had served him, leading such a life as may be imagined, and never approached the sacraments. Now this prince was dying; and Jesus Christ, to show him mercy, commanded St. Bridget to tell her confessor to go and visit him and exhort him to confess his sins. The confessor went, and the sick man said that he did not require confession, as he had often approached the sacrament of Penance.

“The priest went a second time; but this poor slave of hell persevered in his obstinate determination not to confess. Jesus once again told the saint to desire the confessor return. He did so; and on the third occasion he told the sick man about the revelation made to the saint, and that he had come back so many times because Our Lord, Who wished to show him mercy, had so ordered. On hearing this the dying man was touched and began to weep: ‘But how,’ he exclaimed, ‘can I be saved?’; ‘I, who for sixty years have served the devil as his slave, and have my soul burdened with innumerable sins?’

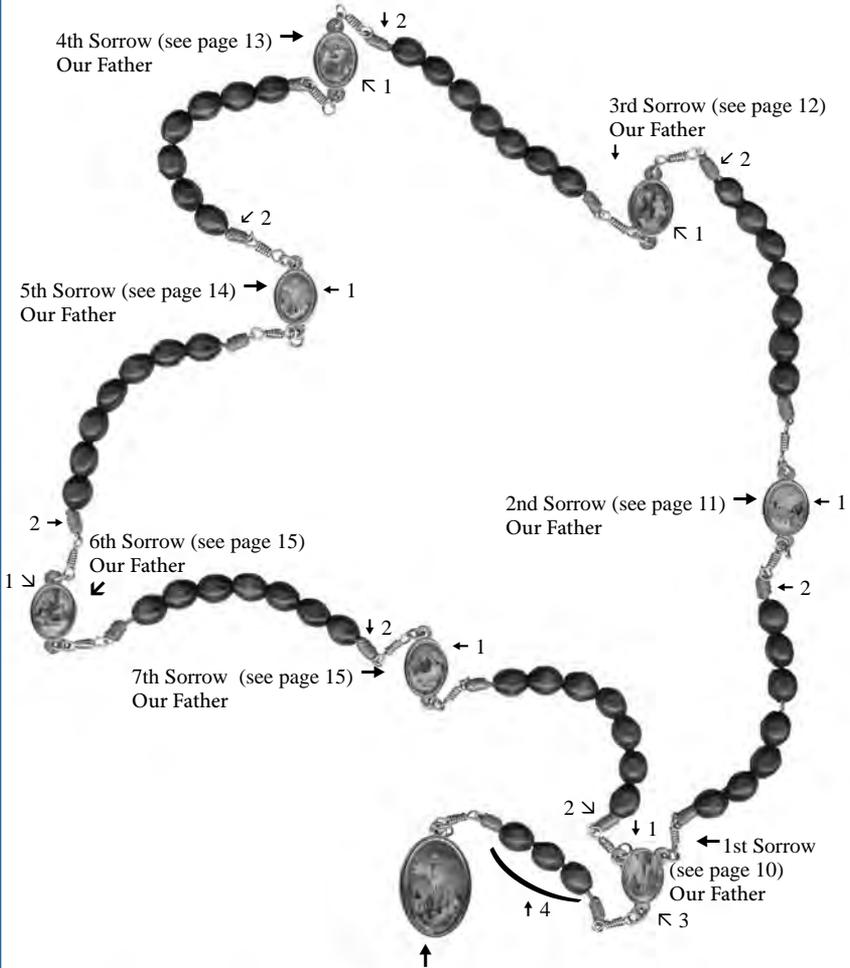
“‘My son,’ answered the Father, encouraging him, ‘doubt not; if you repent of them, on the part of God I promise you pardon.’ Then, gaining confidence, he said to the confessor, ‘Father, I looked upon myself as lost, and already despaired of salvation; but now I feel a sorrow for my sins, which gives me confidence; and since God has not yet abandoned me, I will make my confession.’

“In fact, he made his confession four times on that day, with the greatest marks of sorrow, and on the following morning received Holy Communion. On the sixth day, contrite and resigned, he died. After his death, Jesus Christ again spoke to St. Bridget, and told her that that sinner was saved; that he was then in purgatory, and that he owed his salvation to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin His Mother. For the deceased, although he had led so wicked a life, had nevertheless always preserved devotion to the sorrows of Our Lady, and whenever he thought of them pitied Her.”

... Taken from *The Glories of Mary* by St. Alphonsus de Liguori, pages 479-480.

# How to Pray the Chaplet of the Seven Sorrows

see also page 8



Make the Sign of the Cross

Act of Contrition

**V.** O God, come to my assistance.

**R.** O Lord, make haste to help me.

1. Announce Sorrow and pray one Our Father. (see page 24)

● The Hail Mary (see page 24)

2. Verse: My Mother, share Thy grief... (see page 11)

3. Hail, Holy Queen... and O God, at Whose Passion... (see page 16)

4. Three Hail Marys in honor of the tears shed by Our Lady



### **Act of Contrition**

Oh my God I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, and I detest all my sins because dread the loss of Heaven and the pains of hell; but most of all because they offend Thee my God, Who art all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve with the help of Thy grace to confess my sins, to do penance and to amend my life. Amen.

*For more information contact:*

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